The Next Great Adventure

by aliengirlguy

Summary

The Master of Death is sent to be more interesting in a dimension filled with time traveling, space ships, aliens, exploration and adventures to where no one has gone before. Warning: A few mentions of straight people, but don't worry they aren't a big part of the story.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
Chapter 1: Endings, Prelude to the Beginning.

When they say that there is a beginning for everything, it is usually because it soon follows the ending of others.

Harry James Potter came to understand that sentiment in a way that many beings rarely could conceive of.

It started with him dying.

It was not the flirtation of near death that he had experienced from infancy to the bare beginnings of his adulthood no, it was a complete walk to his doom. He was accompanied by the shadows of those who had once lived that had mattered to him, and when he spread his arms wide and embraced the Death Curse for the second and final time, he had taken an odd sort of comfort that he could finally move on to where those who had loved him had moved on and rest.

But even dying wouldn’t be easy. He was given a choice, a choice that no mortal had ever been offered before, and in the face of his deceased mentor, he took the opportunity to live again, because a part of him just couldn’t let go and leave the world to take care of itself.

So he lived again. He defeated his nemesis and murderer, he turned to a people rocked by the casualties of war and took their collective hands and led them into a new millennium of peace. He was The-Man-Who-Lived and chained to that moniker.

For a time anyway.

As what was expected of him, he continued on and became the epitome citizen. He got a job with the Aurors, to continue his work as defender of people, he dated then married a nice witch and they both settled down in a modest home, and soon had 3 children. His friends and schoolmates eventually drifted off and started their own careers and families.

It was seemingly perfect, but there was a hitch to this ideal life, in so fact that, despite his best efforts, Harry himself, and despite many attempts to hide it, was himself not the ideal person to match his persona. Certainly he lived loved and laughed how he was supposed to, and for a time he even fooled himself that he was even happy, but a shadow loomed ever more presently in the background of this perfect tableau. A shadow that got more pronounced with every first grey hair on his wife’s and friends heads, with every wrinkle or wince of age that peppered them, as was normal. One such as he would be expected to bare a grey streak at the temples, the start of a silvered beard to match his old mentor one day maybe, as was expected of the perfect normal aging hero of the people.

Only the reflection, the true reflection of him, denied him that normalcy. A face that remained pure of wrinkles barring a few scars or two there and there, his spine remained straight, his joints strong, his hair as dark as when he was a boy.

Ginny, his beautiful wife who bore all the well signs of well earned living, one day sat him down, still almost frantically clinging to the lie, to the ideal, and looked him straight in the eye and quietly asked him to stop.

She talked and he was forced to listen as she told him that, while she loved him she was getting to
old for lying, and so she calmly told him “Your not an ordinary wizard Harry.”

He had protested, he had fought to the bitter end as Ginny laid out the harsh naked truth to him. She was aging, their friends and family were aging, and one day, will die from old age and Harry...Harry would not. He would look the same on their friends deathbed on Ginny’s deathbed, on his children’s and grandchildren’s death beds and so on.

He had broken down then, sobbing into his wife’s breast as she held him as he finally was forced to accept the truth. It was during this breakdown that Ginny had told him that he had to leave and never come back, that it was what was best for the both of them, that she wasn’t strong enough to withstand the bitterness of his perpetual youthful beauty. But even as the words were harsh and emotionless sounding, there was a tear in her eye, and a tight grip of her arms around his shuttering figure.

Harry left that same day, taking only his wand and the cloths on his back.

He not to long after disappeared from the Wizarding World altogether.

Ooo ooo ooo

100 years later...

At the edge of a cliff in a location of little relevance, a young man screamed his madness to the sky and with a bitter twist of his lips, watched the sun rise on yet another same day, as so many others before. He supposed it was a little over dramatic, but he felt it cathartic for his eternally youthful old heart. He was just turning to climb down off his favorite cliff edge and make himself some cereal, when his foot caught on a loose slippery stone, and with a tumble, Harry Potter fell forward into the breath taking coldness.

Within the space of a minute, maybe two, there was nothing more, and nothing less then a tragic youthful figure who was torn apart in the jagged embrace of the mountains. A frozen abstract of twisted limbs and red frozen tableau of some unknown tragedy.

A figure at some point appeared, perched on the tip of a jagged thorn of half frozen stone that was currently the only brace for the long dead body impaled upon it. Bone white toes sticking out from the hem of flowing dark robes, wiggled in absent delight at the texture.

“How utterly boring,” a voice uttered under the dark abyss that was its cowl, great brittle wings rose from the fold of the tall figure spreading out and stretching, giving a brief flap, “could you be anymore dramatic?” the figure sighed, leaning on a long scythe the colour of aged bone.

The broken body didn’t answer of course, through that was likely because the skull was completely shattered and the jaw sat somewhere in a birds nest some where, extra support for the little eggs.

Instead the figure turned its gaze to the agonizingly bright spot of formless soul buzzing in depression and rage not to far from its old housing.

“How utterly boring,” a voice uttered under the dark abyss that was its cowl, great brittle wings rose from the fold of the tall figure spreading out and stretching, giving a brief flap, “could you be anymore dramatic?” the figure sighed, leaning on a long scythe the colour of aged bone.

The soul, if one could ascribe any sort of silly descriptions such as sound to the no longer living, would have been growling at the speaker.

“Must you sulk so?” The figure sighed, furling its wings, “it is rather unbecoming for the Master of Death.”

The soul, if one could ascribe any sort of silly descriptions such as sound to the no longer living, would have been growling at the speaker.

“My, such a pleasant Master I find myself with,” he sighed dryly, reaching out long sharp fingers and plucked the stubborn soul, invisible to all but Death itself of course. The long serpentine neck
stretched upward and considered the scenery with distaste. It was so appropriately desolate. Dramatics indeed.

The being eventually allowed itself to rise into the air with a lazy sweep of wings until nothing but clouds flourished around it.

“Now,” the darkness under the hood hummed, and turned glowing pits of blank whiteness on the caged soul in its hands, “You have been a troublesome creature. Flirting, intentionally or not, for my hand over your inconsequential little existence. I was amused sometimes, irritated others, even flattered here and there I admit, such a suitor you have been!” Death crooned, stroking the soul, which shivered in its grasp, amusing Death further, “But you grew boring after I took the last of your loved ones, my how you howled.” Death’s amusement faded.

“You have sat like a lump since your first resurrection, and you have had over a hundred years to be interesting again, but no you refused! And you got worse as time past, wallowing in the remnants of your paltry mortality like some nostalgic entrapped idiot! You refuse to take advantage of my favour!”

Death gripped the soul angrily, the existence in its clutches wreathed in pain.

Death relaxed its grip and sighed, reclining on a nearby storm cloud, “I suppose I can only blame myself, I returned you at your choice back to life, true, but I could have just sent you back into another world, another existence, another time. My mistake when you are such a tiny wisp yet of existence, you weren’t given a chance to be interesting when surrounded by the trappings of your old mortality. Yes, I have been lax with my poor little master.”

Death, as much as death could be interpreted as doing such, grinned, “But again we find ourselves in a conundrum. You have refused to return to your body, though admittedly it is a bit of a mess, nor have you tried to at least decently haunt someone or other. But you can’t remain without a body for long. It is the price of being the Master of Death, whether willingly or no, so I think I will do what I should have done, oh yes, no more mistakes this time!...Mmm so entertaining you will be!”

Death crowd whirling the soul around like a newly received puppy, which the soul didn’t appreciate at all.

“Such language!” Death cackled, “well, know matter, I can tell your excited!” if souls could manage incredulous deadpan, it would have been exuding it right then.

“Now lets see...” Death hummed, idly bouncing the soul on a slight definition of a knee, then a sort of elbow and a sort of foot, until Death had quite a delightful game of soul hackey-sack going as it thought.

“Well, I just can’t have you flinging yourself off the next high surface once your reconstituted and yet again refuse to continue on over and over...So a few adjustments need to be made, oh yes. No more choice in resurrection for you!” Death chortled, its master was going to be so deliciously enraged! It should have thought of this earlier! Oh well, spilt life-force secretions and all that.

Nodding to itself, it finished its idle game, gathering its master’s soul close, and collapsed in on itself like a dying star and vanishing.

Chapter End Notes
One of the things that gives me joy as a Trekker (or any other fan of particular name) is the creative fan works from all artistic avenues. So at the end of my chap updates, I will put a recommendation of whatever I come across that I find interesting.

Recommendation: "Data & Picard" by Pogo at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yd6N40_FoHo
“Hey Henry...Yo Henry!”

A mop of black hair looked up from the paper he was reading, the headline blazing:

New Planet Discovered! Say Hello to Pluto!

A rambunctious ball of energy and freckles skidded to a stop in front of Henry, who gamely put down his paper and grumbled about his his reading being disturbed, but the boy who had called out to him just slid into the seat in the booth and began rambling excitedly as the two of them shared Henry’s barely touched scrambled eggs in the small diner not far from the bay where the both of them worked.

“So I told Charlie, and he didn’t believe me, but I swear me n’ Pat snuck into Bay Land n’ watched Kid McCook cream Mike Mason in the ring! I jus’ think he was jealous is all, cause he’s to tall to sneak in the little crawly holes.”

“Benji,” Henry groaned, “that fight was last night! Did you even go to bed? You know how the foreman feels about lax workers.”

The freckled 18 year old sniffed, ruffling slightly greasy sandy hair “ ‘course I didn’t go to sleep, didn’t even have a chance to change, who could after a fight like that? It was the match of the century! I bet they show it in the big theatres!” he wiped his nose, “Besides, I got a nice little hot mama with hot java by the bucket loads for a lad with a puppy dog eye bat,” he waggled his thick eye brows.

Henry snorted, returning to his paper, “Those sweet baby blues of yours can only get you so far Benj.”

Benji snorted, “yeah ‘cause when has the mighty Henry Porter, the best iron smelter on the east and west side, and his trusty partner in crime Benji, ever be ‘portant?” he sniffed, “the only high stakes we’ll ever have is the feet we’re danglin’ over the bay hammering hot iron.”

To Benji’s irritation, the older teen, or young adult (his friend was rather vague on his age really, except to say that he was older then Benji), actually seemed ridiculously pleased by that analysis. Benji never understood how a man could actually enjoy the back breaking labour and obscurity of
an average Joe, but then again, there was always something not quite so average about his friend. Nothing that Benji could pin down, he looked like any other fellow, barring those disturbingly piercing greens of his at times, but nevertheless something in the deepest craw of his subconscious, something caveman, that said: “This fella aint like other fellas.”

Still, Henry was a good chap. The two had ended up as roommates at one of the many slum houses in the seedier end of San Fran, and despite Henry’s initial put-off-ness, he eventually warmed up to Benji’s unrepentant friendly personality that didn’t take no for an answer.

Eventually they got work, both men couldn’t help marvelling at the half finished glory that was this new Goliath of a bridge that was supposed to bring in all the tourists, despite the worst period that Benji had ever seen in his country. Benji shivered, feeling damn lucky that he and his chums had managed to maintain work and a roof over their head since the crash. He knew many were not so lucky.

“So I take it your not up for our little...adventure tonight?” Benji wheedled, wagging his eyebrows again.

Henry shorted as they all piled into the lift and it started to rise, “a fair sight better then you’ll be Mr. Fight of the Century.”

Bengi shot his roommate a brilliant smile. It was scathing but it wasn’t a no.

“Well, make sure your wearing your best duds, ‘cause we are putting on the Ritz tonight!”

Ooo ooo ooo

Later that evening, Henry and Benji let out relieved grunts when the final horn sounded the end of shift. The sun was just setting over the bay as the two friends quickly deposited their gear in their shared locker, quickly scrubbed down, taking turns with the hose, and got dressed in their Sunday best that was usually reserved for church and co-worker’s funerals. Henry himself had made them for him and Benji, and his friend often remarked at how great he was with a needle. Henry didn’t disabuse him of the notion.

Benji was dressed to the nines in a grey cotton shirt, red and grey tie, and spiffy dark grey fedora sitting jauntily on his head, completing the look with a tan trench coat.

“Man would you look at me!” Benji had crooned the first time he had put it on, “I look like one of them gumshoes from the pictures!”

Henry was currently wearing a dark navy suit and fedora, a pale blue cotton shirt, and a burgundy bow tie with white spots.

“So if we’re putting on the ritz,” Henry prodded with a frown, “how exactly are we going to afford it?”

Benji shrugged, “its all Pat really, he got this new gig at the Coco Bongo, his gal is the latest fresh Canary, got all them rich flappers agog, she got Pat the tickets, enough for all five of us!”

“Five?” Henry asked suspiciously, smelling a trap, literally as he was tossed Benji’s well horded cologne that he only brought out during dates, “Ben-ji!” Henry ground out.

Benji waved his hand, “come on Henry, when’s the last time you even gazed at a dame?”

“I gazed at plenty of folk!” Henry defended with a pout, “Hell, I wooed Barbette, that trapeze artist,
for an entire week!"

“Yeah, convenient that the circus was leaving town the week after, adn your definition of wooin’ was just watchin’ like some sort of creeper.”

Henry pouted.

“Yeah, I’ve seen your gaze on a few bodies,” Benji pointed out, “even seen you disappear for a few rolls with working gals and guys, but you’ve never really got over Her, you know, that dame you some times mention but never really go inta detail about.”

At Henry’s glower, Bengi hastily continued, dropping the matter, “look it aint nothing to worry about! Just a casual get together, a little booze, a little dancin’ I swear! Besides, Jessica is a real doll! I swear! And...er,”

“And...?”

“Well, she’s Bernice’s cousin, just came to the city and is kind of nervous you know? A country girl, never been to the big city, and she needs a good sort of chap that...well...”

“Would be to gentlemanly in taking advantage of her on the first date?” Henry raised a brow, somewhat amused but sighed, “Fine, so its you, me, your latest hot mama, her cousin, Pat and his canary, and that’s it?”

Benji nodded.

Henry grunted, “Fine.”

Ooo ooo ooo

In another place and time, 2267...

A man in perhaps ill fated red toned coveralls was busily working.

He, like hundreds of others dressed in uniforms of gold, blue and red worked on board a large space fairing vessel, that is seeking out new life and new civilizations.

She’s a glorious piece of technology, all swoops and angles, efficient yet with almost a grace about it. Nothing but the epitome of human ingenuity, the vast vacuum of space, and the cold light of distant stars in which the crew of this vessel travelled, to boldly go where no one has gone before.

Of course Gerald, said red suited menial worker, was not one who dwell on the allure of the vast unknown. Certainly he recognized the allure of course, and their captain was a charismatic leader who knew how to inspire his crew, even if he had a slight habit of pausing to think before uttering every other word, but Gerald was looking forward to settling down with his fiance, a man that had not been happy at the long distance relationship method. After some thought, Gerald realized that what he really wanted was to settle down to with his soon-to-be, perhaps back on earth or a space station maybe. He was maintenance after all. Well, he was transporter chief, still he could do his duty just as well on a space station. Besides, nothing interesting ever really happened to him anyway.

Just as he was thinking all this, a figure with crazed eyes and manic disposition snuck up quietly behind him, delivering a sudden sharp chop to the vulnerable points on the juncture of Gerald’s neck and his right lower torso with quick efficiency.
The attacker snatched the unconscious man’s phaser, and with a quick flick of fingers on the controls of a nearby computer panel, jumped onto a glowing circular pad, and disappeared in a shimmer of energy.

1 hour later...

A frantic, and yes normally charismatic, starship captain by the name of James T Kirk, surrounded by a small handful of crew on a mysterious planet, watched as his crazed doctor and close friend jumped through an ancient alien artifact before he could stop him, an arched gateway that spoke, literally, of time. Upon the passage of one barking mad Leonard McCoy into the stream of images, said arch intoned severely.

"He has passed into... what was..."

A few minutes later...

“Captain, I can’t reach anyone! The equipment works, but its...as if she weren’t there!” the Scottish brogue, heavy with confusion from his Chief Engineer behind him. His answer once again came from the device.

"Your vessel, your beginning, all that you knew is gone." ooo ooo ooo

Back in 1930...

Henry stared at the voluptuous redhead, or rather stared up.

It was times like this he cursed his less than tall stature.

“Well,” Jessica cooed, “Aren't you a darling?”

Said simple country girl was dressed to the nines in a slinky strapless red dress. She had long mid-back fiery red hair, part of which coyly covered half her face, revealing a large mauve shadowed greenish-gold eye that was half lidded under a thin arched eye brow.

She smiled coyly, reached out and gently clacked Henry’s mouth closed.

There was something almost ridiculous in her proportions- now that he had recovered from his shock at his expectations being not what they were (something he rather wryly thought he should be used to by now at his age)- and thus he could properly consider what he was looking at. She was almost to voluptuous, like one of those hyper-sexualized cartoon characters that Henry remembered from his rather extensive past.

Jessica Leporidae, despite Harry being disconcerted with their initial meeting, did at least provide something of an entertaining date. She had a rather saucy, though spot on wit, skewing this or that personage from the celebrity pages, and the two of them kept a brisk pace of rejoinders all the way to the. They met up near the back, where they were to be seated, with Pat, a burly fellow who was actually smaller then Henry in size, but ridiculously muscled with close buzzed blond hair. He was busy talking eagerly about the past evening’s fight with Benj, while Bernice, Benji’s date who had her cousin’s colouring though was slightly more realistically proportioned, had a quick discussion with Pat’s girlfriend, Tina (a nearly as voluptuous blond), who was performing that evening.

Finally conversation ebbed, Henry’s whisky, on the rocks of course, was pleasantly warming his insides, and he had to admit, that Jessica was delightful. When Jessica discreetly rested her hand on his thigh in invitation, the look in her eyes seriously projecting the message that they could slip out and go back to his or her place and do the ol’pattyake.
Henry gently removed her hand, setting it discreetly back on her own leg, patting it awkwardly, and gave her a slight shake of his head.

He had a feeling that any rolls with her would not be something that would just be one off. There was way too much potential in her for something more to develop, and Henry was not looking for that. It’s why he was into one-off and temporary partners, or plural. No commitment. Not after Her.

She looked disappointed, but she didn’t push him further. The interesting conversation remained between them, but this time it was more equally distributed among the others.

After the main show; an odd sort of number between Tina and another performer dressed in a turquoise cabana outfit and green face paint performed an amazing feat of musical beat, singing, and flexibility that seemed almost inhuman; the group decided to call it for the night.

Everyone split off from that. Benji and Henry were taking Jessica and Bernice home, and the two would be heading out for a late tuck-in before they had to go to bed to get enough shut-eye for when when they were to be dragged off to church with by the flop house landlady (mandatory for anyone staying in that particular building).

30 minutes later...

The two men were walking down the street, Benji shooting his older friend a considering look, wondering if he should breach the comradely quiet. Henry looked pleasantly content, head turned upwards, staring at what little stars got through the smog choked sky and tightly packed buildings, humming “Chick-chiki-boom.”

He finally decided to go for it.

“That Jessica, she was quite something wasn’t she?”

Henry hummed in agreement.

Benji stopped walking and suddenly gripped Henry’s shoulder.

“Look Henry, we’ve been roommates for over a year now, and...well, I’m worried about you. Except for a few times with me and Pat, you rarely go out outside of work. You never bring anyone home or stay overnight somewhere else, despite your little slips into the shadows in back alleys, an occasional swing or two with circus performers. Sure a fella can be easy with his fun, but you never seem to at least...I don’t know, try for commitment. You make me think of a lonely old man sometimes Hen.”

Henry shook his friend off, and picked up his pace muttering, “I’m no good for the long term shuffle Benj, you know that. No matter the bodies, no matter the personalities, its all a brief slap and tickle and no more for me. I...I’m not good for anything more then that.”

“Wait! Henry!”

Benji chased after his surprisingly fast walking friend.

The two were just rounding the corner and onto their street, Henry stopping when Benji grabbed his shoulder, when a deep green Cadillac V-8 slid up and the iron tip of a tommy slid out of the passenger side window.

Before either of the two young men could react, the night was filled with concussed thunder and flashes of gunpowder.
“Go! Go!” the shooter yelled at the driver, and the two zoomed away.

Ooo ooo ooo

The police said it was a miracle that he had survived without a scratch on him, especially in such close range to the business end of a serious machine like a tommy gun.

Henry had laughed long and hard and there was serious talk among the attending ambulance driver and the detective on the scene about calling for a paddywagon. The gruff policeman had reevaluated that order when Henry stopped laughing and began crying, which, while uncomfortable for the gruff police officer was nothing new.

Henry had then given his statement, told them that Benji had pushed him out of the way at the last minute. A blanket was put around him, and the officer nodded comfortingly while biting on his cigar.

After the police were done with him, Henry went about arranging the last rights for the body, as Benji didn’t have any living relatives, and Bernice was too distraught to contribute. He was buried in a small bit of plot in the local cemetery. There was no grave stone just a plaque that simply stated:

Benjamin Dixon Hill, b. 1912- d. 1930.

Pat and he had stood with a few of the others who knew Benj from work or in the neighbourhood. There was also Bernice, who had left the earliest, unable to handle her grief in public, lead off by Jessica and Tina.

Eventually everyone drifted off, only leaving Henry alone at the grave side.

He felt...oddly nothing. His initial grief at the murder scene had been reactionary more than anything, but now, he was numb.

“You know, I had almost allowed myself to forget,” Henry mused out loud, though not to himself “I was always so careful to avoid the one kind of love, that without shoring myself up against it, I let another kind weasel in.”

“Must you ruin such a lovely day by being so depressingly macabre?” Death grumbled, leaning against the tombstone of a more well off resident nearby.

Henry huffed quietly, contemplating the rising of the full moon.

A rattling sigh, “you are so boring when your little pet mortals succumb to me.”

“Those I come to love die and leave me behind. This does not become easier to experience you soulless prat!” Henry snarled, whirling to face the entity.

Death chortled, then hopped up onto the grave stone and began hopping from stone head to stone head humming.

“So is that why you regret your closeness with your little pup then?”

“I don’t regret it!” Henry denied, offended.

“Oh really? So if you were to go back a year and somehow make sure that the 2 of you never became friends in the first place, you wouldn’t do it?”

Henry was silent a moment as he considered those words. There was a part of him, a hurting part
that remembered his, though brief, time being Benji’s friend as one of the better experiences he’d had in a long time. No, he wouldn’t give up that time.

Death seemed to read the conclusion from his mind, as it chuckled again.

“And should this happen again?”

“It won’t happen again! I won’t allow it!” Henry snapped.

“Ri-ight,” Death skeptically drawled, then added, almost casually, “you know, if you allowed me to unlock just a little bit more of yours...”

“NO!”

Death pouted, “one little spell...”

“I am not going to make this Merlin forsaken unending existence of mine any more entertaining for you!”

Death gave its equivalent of blowing a raspberry, causing distant shrieks of horror as several birds dropped out of the sky dead.

With that parting shot, Death disappeared.

Chapter End Notes

As you can see, Harry no longer uses his original name, this is a trend that he will continue on, so don’t get comfortable with Henry Porter or the "H and P" names.

Also as you all have likely noticed, Trek is starting to show up now, and will start to be more prominently referenced as the chaps go along.

Cookies to those who caught the Jessica Rabbit reference.

Recommended fan-made this week: ♪ STAR TREK BEYOND THE MUSICAL - Animated Parody Song by Lhugueny at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIKL-rXDKnE
Chapter Notes

This chap references characters and events from Star Trek: TOS "City on the Edge of Forever" S1E28.

This chap is short, as I am picking up the pace of HP's time in the past.

Henry couldn’t take any time off of work to grieve in peace, there was always a needy soul waiting in the wings to take his job, and while San Francisco wasn’t quite as bad as some of the other cities, since it hadn’t been forced to close its banks and had the good sense to invest in a couple major construction projects that provided work, the streets were nevertheless still overflowing with the out of work homeless. If you wanted the basic necessities of life, even if they may not be all of them from time to time, you worked, no matter the situation.

So Henry worked. He was methodical and efficient, and if the Foreman and a few of his co-workers occasionally shot him pitying looks and shared the occasional bit of their sausage or sip of coffee, it was never talked about.

Eventually a week turned into a month.

Henry eventually got another roommate to help out with the shared rent on the flop, a nice Italian widower who lost his family in the boat ride to America during a storm. As a result, the man was still grieving, the loss still fresh, and thus was not inclined to being chummy, which was convenient for Henry.

Tony was also relatively fit, despite the arduous boat trip, and was able to pull in the work twice as much as Henry. Henry was the sort who believed in everyone pulling a relatively equal amount of fair share, baring capabilities, so once in awhile when Tony would bring home an extra wedge of cheese and bacon to share with their meager supper, Henry in turn mended Tony’s cloths and got him extra work on the bridge when a position opened up.

They weren’t friends, but they commiserated in their mutual experience of loss, and proved the old adage that misery really does indeed love company.

Ooo ooo ooo

‘Its gotten to be that a person can’t even hang their laundry out to dry without it being snatched from one’s fire escape,’ Henry grumbled mentally, ‘though the bloke who stole them wasn’t bad looking,’ as he recounted the brief flash of laughing hazel eyes and carmel blond hair. He hadn’t looked desperate, from what Henry had seen of the brief look of him through his back window before the bloke had made off with Tony’s spare work cloths that Henry had been cleaning.

He never got them back of course, he never expected to, but he had to work extra shifts to buy Tony replacements, feeling responsible in part to their theft.

A week later he had just dropped off the new cloths back home, and realized he had enough on him
to afford the latest *Amazing Detective Stories* magazine, an indulgence of Henry’s, so he had gone out to pick one up before he was to start his night shift.

It was as he was walking to work, magazine shoved into his back pocket, that he witnessed an odd sight.

A man dressed in some sort of pale blue cross between a uniform and pajamas seemed to appear out of nowhere across the street, and began staggering around, yelling about assassins.

It was not totally uncommon to see men deep in their bottles these days raving in the streets. Henry knew intimately the cold comfort of the bottle, but this fellow didn’t look so much drunk as alarmingly ill.

Sweaty short brown hair stuck up in every direction, revealing a deathly pale face molten with almost lesion-like patches of purple. His blue eyes looked almost filmy, and there were flicks of saliva in the corner of his mouth.

It was possible there was more than booze involved drugs was also a fairly common escape. The man spotted Henry who was frozen in curiosity watching him, and lunged forward grabbing his shoulders and shaking him, demanding their location. Henry didn’t smell a lick of alcohol on him, just sweat and desperation. So madness, drugs or both then.


The man, still gripping his shoulders and looking around himself, wild eyed, scoffed, “that’s impossible! This must be some sort of illusion!” the crazed man snatched Henry’s cap off his head, and began examining his skull, “you certainly look humanoid enough to pass as human.”

The man pushed away and staggered backwards, leaning heavily against a nearby wall. “I mean, its a regular museum piece! Right down to the cement pillars!” he patted said ordinary cement pillar.

Henry raised a brow.

Then the man seemed to seize up for a moment, before his eyes rolled back into his head. Henry was just in time to catch him before he fell.

Henry grunted, shifting the figure until he managed to get the 40 something man into a loose fireman’s carry.

Luckily or unluckily for Henry, there was a mission not to far away. A Mission that he was all to painfully familiar with, and staggered in that direction.

When the door of the mission opened, some part of him thought that surely, surely someone as smart and wonderful as *Her* would no longer be here anymore. It had been so long for awhile...

Unfortunately though, *She* had to answer the knock. Henry gave the recognizable brunette an awkward grin, the woman's face falling into shock, then anger as he shifted his unconscious bundle and said “Hey Edith, long time no see.”

ooooo

In the comforting, snug warmth of the back room he remembered so well, Edith Keller, the matron of the shelter, stared at him stonily while Henry fidgeted nervously under the women’s gaze.

“Well Henry, it has been awhile,” she finally intoned.
“Um well, I don’t think its been that long...” he dared to speak awkwardly.

“10 years Henry,” she snapped at him like a whiplash, making the man grimace.

He frowned to himself, as he mentally calculated in his head, then realized that, yes it had been 10 years.

Henry grimaced again, had it been that long? He really needed to keep abreast of that. He hadn’t realized he had lingered in the same place for so long, though for blokes who are without end, years sometimes can blink by faster then light.

“10 years since I found you as naked as the day you were born in some back alley like you did this unfortunate, though oddly dressed soul. Without a name to you let alone cloths. I took you in, bathed you, clothed you, nursed you to some semblance of sanity, then you had the gall, the absolute nerve to be so charming, so deep that I fell in love with you!” She stared at him accusingly, as Henry turned his eyes away from her and stared down at the unconscious man currently prone on a spare cot “Then that night together. I...understood that you couldn’t return my affections the same way that I loved you, I understood that there was something about you that would have never settled down with a simple woman such as myself,” her tone turned almost faraway, a look that reminded Henry uncomfortably of a certain blond girl spouting about nargles in another life, so long ago.

“But when you disappeared the next day, without even a letter! And here you are a decade later with a sick man strung over your shoulder and all you can say is “long time no see?!’

Henry expected it coming, but didn’t bother to dodge the fist that smashed into his face. He yelped as his nose was broken and blood flowed down his face, dripping from his chin.

Edith shook her hand with a grimace, though judging from her expression any injury she might have accrued had still been worth it.

“I named you,” she said quietly. And that quiet disappointment in her voice somehow hurt more then his nose.

Henry turned his head away, grabbing a nearby rag and attempting to staunch the flow, his memories touching briefly on their memorable encounter.

Edith had been a Merlin send to him when he had first found himself in a body again, dumped by Death in 1920's San Fransisco. She was a good woman with strong convictions, firm hand but still compassionate, and she had found him, took him under her wing and helped him like no other. It wasn’t hard to be attracted to her, particularly after so many decades of loneliness, so scared to be as close to anyone as he had been to Ginny, and for a time she made him forget that. he had given into it, and took her in his arms and the two had made love, and for a time in the coitus of pleasure, his head pillowed on her breast, he realized that he could very easily love her. In slumber within her arms, he had dreamed of Ginny, and when he awoke, he had realized what a huge mistake he had made.

Certainly he could choose to settle down with Edith, maybe even marry her, but in the end it was as doomed to failure as his first marriage. Edith was for all intents and purposes a seemingly ordinary human women, she had an unusually exceptional foresight, and a charisma that would see her well in politics if she ever set her sights higher, but normal all the same. She would not understand someone...something like him, and would send him away just as Ginny had.

So he had left, to spare them both. Perhaps it was selfish, yes. But it was also an honest mercy.
Edith sighed, anger draining away as she shook her head in exasperation, saying with that odd insight of hers “I suppose I should not have been surprised, you were always a man on the edge of forever, and looking back on it now, I don't think I would have been the one to stand there with you.”

Henry stood up abruptly under those always shinning wide eyes.

“I need to go Edith.”

“Wait!” Edith exclaimed grabbing his sleeve as he passed. He halted.

They stood in strained tableau for a moment and Henry found himself asking.

“Are you...Are you happy Edith?”

Edith answered without pause.

“Yes Henry, I have found someone, he...he see’s the world like I do, like you did to.”

Henry huffed a breath, before turning and grasping the woman’s hand, vibrant green eyes from behind wire rimmed spectacles meeting fathomless brown, “No Edith, not like you, not like your new Beau, and that was part of why I left.”

Edith sighed, letting her hand drop without another word, and Henry whirled around and left. Both knowing that this was the last they would see of each other.

ooo ooo ooo

The next day, after exchanging playful jabs with Mac the newspaper man, both bemoaning baseball, and arranging for Henry to take a temporary job delivering papers while Mac’s regular paper boy was out sick, Henry left with a newspaper that would spout a small article in the back about the tragic car accident of Edith Keller, prominent community philanthropist.

Henry didn’t go into work that day.

In fact, he didn’t show up to work the next day, or the day after that. When Pat came by the flop to check in on Henry, Tony informed the man that Henry had left.

ooo ooo ooo

4 years later, New York City...

“You can’t believe what a delight it is for me to meet you Mr. Tormé, coffee?’

Jay J. Stanley had been in the pulp magazine business for some time now. He had seen a lot of writers come and go, some hack talents, some marginal, and some true gems, gems like the young man sitting across from him.

He had no illusions that his magazine was anything but moderately successful. Since that Metropolis Picture came out in ‘27, it had galvanized the young writers into a more spectacular Science Fiction genre, and mystery zines such as his were suddenly second banana. He’d been forced to open the magazine up to other genre’s to accommodate for competition, but Mystery was still the primary drive.

Then one day, sitting in his intake box was a short story “The Big Good Bye” featuring the tale of gumshoe Dixon Hill.
At first glance it was a character that appeared no different then any other private detective, but under that staple tan trench coat, snappy fedora and tie, was a man brimming with cynicism and optimism in equal measures. A man of humor and wit, and a mind as keen as a modern day Sherlock Holmes, perhaps with eyes that were to bright sometimes.

When the last edition of the pulp was released with Dixon Hill enjoying the view from his office window over looking San Fransisco in the back, nothing was expected to be any different from any other sort of release.

But only days later, Stanley’s inbox was practically overflowing with demands for more Dixon Hill stories, interspersed with gushing praise and near, almost alarming zealous desire for more.

Stanley had scrambled for the author’s contact information.

The youth sitting across from him was dressed rather sloppily in a grey button up and denim breeches. His dark black hair was not slicked back, as was the fashion for young men, but instead was loose and flyaway, as if combs were a foreign concept. He wore round wire rimmed spectacles that perched on a pert nose, and nary a blooming whisker to be found on his chin. Ah to be young again!

“No coffee thanks," the author replied, "you called me and said it was urgent? Was there something wrong with my submission?”

“No, no, in fact it s quite the opposite!” Jay J chortled around the cigar between his teeth, “it seems that the public rather enjoyed your story young man, that's why you're here.”

Jay J used his considerable talents in persuasion and negotiation, and had soon persuaded the young writer in a steady supply of Dixon Hill for his ravenous readers. After the particulars were taken care of, Jay J felt himself compelled to ask.

“I have to ask kid, Dixon is such an enigmatic character!, what inspired you in his creation?”

The young man smiled, though there was a sad little edge to it, “he was inspired by a few people I knew not to long ago, people that I loved...nothing more nothing less.”

Chapter End Notes

Cookies to those who guessed that our main character ended up becoming the other of the Dixon Hill series favored by Picard from Star Trek TNG.

"Mac" the Newspaper man was from the first appearance of Dixon Hill in the Star Trek series.

Jay J. is a vague reference to J. Jonah Jamison from Spiderman, mainly because he is the epitome newspaper/zine head honcho that pops up into my mind whenever i think of them.

Recommendation: "Which is Nerdier: Star Wars or Star Trek?” at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gd5yB9Vmd6I
“Wow Harris, you are so tense right now man, here have another drag.”

A shaggy long haired blond man with a scraggly beard leaned over another younger appearing man with messy dark hair, the second of which getting an eye full of a slightly hairy, though still rather fit torso.

The second man accepted the rolled up tote and took a long drag, groaning as the blond continued to use those talented fingers to massage his chest.

“Man, I don’t know if its the booze but I can't get over how I keep forgetting the scars, “ the blond traced the brunette’s left pectoral which sported a puckered scar next to a group of others.

“Jeff...” the voice was relaxed still, but held a finality to it.

The blond rolled his eyes and continued to mold his hands to the tense muscles, “Your such a mysterious dude already Har, you don’ gotta milk the mystery all the time.” But of course, like every time they were together, Harris never bothered to reveal the various stories that lay behind the road map of experiences etched onto his skin, and not the fun, inked way either. Quincey just took another drag and didn't push it.

“So did you see that movie that's out? Rosemary's Baby?” Jeff asked as his hands went lower.

“Yeah,” Harris passed the joint back to the other man who took a drag and handed it back, turning to Harris’ right leg, “Got kicked out again.”

Jeff rolled his eyes, “I never understand why you laugh your ass off at every horror movie you go to.”

Harris chortled, “When you’ve seen the shit I’ve see over the centuries mate, you’d find ‘em funny to.”

Jeff blew a few smoke rings, turning to the left leg, fingers digging into the sensitive juncture of the back of Harris’ knee, making him shiver.

“You have got to share the stuff your on man, that acid sounds like some sort of H.G Wells shit.”

“Trust me, you don’t want what I'm on,” Harris groaned, green eyes going half lidded when fingers began to playfully dip along his inner thighs.

“Whatever, anyway, you know how the man has been especially downing us lately?” ‘us’ being the rest of their live love and peace out brethren that dotted the field with psychedelic vans and beaded tents outside their own den of smoke, “I had this rad idea!”
“What idea? This better not be another brownie bake sale outside the Whitehouse again.” Harris grumbled, then groaned when those teasing fingers retreated to the backs of his legs, rubbing the sensitive flesh behind his knees, the teasing arse.

“Well I thought the good congressmen looked rather relaxed,” Quincy mused.

Harris rolled his eyes, but soon got distracted as those delightful hands got bolder again.

“Though, I guess we can’t do much if we’re behind bars,” Quincey sighed, “But this idea is better then that, ya see I was thinking—”

Off course Harris never found out what the man was thinking.

There was a sudden flash of light all around them.

From one blink of an eye they had been in their red carpeted van enjoying each others company, and the next the two men found themselves lying on a plush floor being stared at by a group of people: One man with dark skin, short buzzed hair and...pointed ears, a man in a red uniform with short wavy blond hair dressed in a red uniform sitting down, a man with short curly brown hair in a red uniform, and a short women with brownish blond hair pulled back, also in a red uniform with a severe look on her face.

All four of them stared at them.

The woman rounded on the brunette man, "Q!"

“Well, sorry about that gentlemen.” the standing brunette man apologized, though he looked highly amused and decidedly not apologetic, then gestured to Jeff who was currently being helped to his feet by Harris, “I was aiming for the blond haired fellow, excuse me,” he snapped his fingers in the raven haired man's direction, only to frown down at them, as if he expected something to happen. Then the fellow called Q shot a glower at the sitting short haired blond as if he blamed him for something.

Said man just shrugged, shooting him an impish grin.

Perhaps it was the drugs, or a certain lack of care to their unclothed state, neither Harris nor Jeff had a rather obvious lack of care about the fact that they were currently stark naked, skin shinning all over from the oil, and decidedly displaying just what these kidnappers had interrupted.

Harris put his hands on his hips, looking annoyed and shot some empty corner in the room a glower.

“Death!” he growled suddenly, “Can’t a bloke get some without you cock blocking me for your own amusement?”

Meanwhile, another group of colorful figures, had also been flashed in along with the two naked men. One was yet another red uniformed male with a rakish look, brown hair pulled back and an impressively groomed beard had stomped up to the man called Q and demanded an explanation, While another was a man who looked like he had been pulled out of the Renaissance in a long grey curly wig and was busy sputtering at the two naked gentleman next to him, covering his eyes and moaning about not eating those odd smelling pickles before bed.

The woman in the room finally seemed to have had enough of the chaos and clapped her hands together smartly, drawing all their attention and saying in a calm though authoritative tone, “I assure you gentlemen, we mean none of you any harm, you are all just temporary guests for the
moment. I am Cpt. Catherine Janeway."

Harris leaned against a nearby metal wall. out of the corner of his eye he could see Death laughing its non-existent arse off, though from what he had gathered, the entity had not been the one to shanghai him. He turned his attention to this Cpt. Janeway.

Jeff spoke first after her introduction, “Listen, I'm sure this is just some far out trip on some bad stuff, but uh, would any of you hallucinations mind lending us a pair of pants?” Jeff scratched his rough hair, not so much embarrassed, but suddenly feeling a bit awkward under the stern gaze of the trippy woman who suddenly reminded him of his mother.

There was a snap of fingers and suddenly both Harris and Quincey were wearing a pair of simple jeans.

Harris blinked down at the pants, then really took in the setting. The grayish metal walls, the endless void of space with starlight streaking past outside the window, the pointy ears of the dark skinned man, the futuristic looking tech.

“Huh,” Harris muttered under his breath, "of all the things I never expected to happen, getting kidnapped by aliens is one of them," much more loudly to the group in general he decided to get the ball rolling, "So...I'm Harris, this is Jeff," he gestured to the blond beside him.

“Issac Newton,” the man in the long curly grey wig bowed slightly, taking up the introductions.

“Will Riker, “ the bearded man red introduced.

“Q” said the one who gave them pants, “and this deranged miscreant is Q,” he gestured to the sitting blond.

“I am Lieutenant Commander Tuvok,” Pointy ears introduced, eye brow still cocked at the tableau in front of him.

"Pleasure," Harris said to the group at large, folding his arms over his barred chest, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed that Death had meandered over to the sitting Q, looking interested.

"Now that introductions are out of the way," she came to stand before the group, "I wish for you all to consider for a moment, that it might be possible to travel forward in time, say to the 24th century on board a star ship some 75,000 light years from Earth” Janeway paused, seeing the rather dumbfounded looks on newton's and Jeff's faces, the severe look on Commander Riker's, though Harris, having gone to stand by the window, staring outside with his arms crossed, wasn't revealing anything.

She quickly changed tactics at two of the disbelieving looks and said:

“Your having a very strange dream,” she paced back towards the sitting man, “and in this dream you are meeting this man,” she gestured to the blond Q who wiggled his fingers and smiled charmingly at the group, “whom you have all meant before."

Newton was the first to recognize the man, his exclamation revealed Q as the culprit who had jostled the tree he had been sitting on which caused the infamous apple to drop on his head, and thus a new wave of science was introduced to humanity.

Jeff also recognized the blond, “hey...wait, I know this dude! Your that guy who rescued me from drowning in the river when I tried living in the wilderness last month!” he rushed forward and grasped Q in his arms, giving him a big squeeze, much to the amused Q's delight.
“And by saving you,” the other Q intoned, “he ensured that you would be present at a mass orgy a week from where I took you from in Minnesota where you get a lovely red head pregnant. You then clean up your act, settle down, and teach philosophy at UCLA.

Jeff dropped the other Q, looking bug eyed, “What!” he squawked.

The Vulcan frowned, “I am unfamiliar with this man’s countenance being record in human philosophical teachings.”

Q smirked, “it wasn’t his philosophy that makes him important to this trial my dear Mr. Tuvok,” the brunette turned to a flummoxed looking Jeff, “would you mind enlightening everyone as to your full name?”

Jeff blinked then stuttered, “Uh, Jeff Gordon Cochrane.”

Q smirked victoriously, “Exactly! Without Q to rescue this stoner over here, there wouldn’t have been any little stoner juniors, and so on and so forth to give birth to one Zefram Cochrane! And thus Earth would still be a piddling pre-warp ruin of a society that I would have come along later and snapped out of existence out of boredom.”

After that big reveal that meant absolutely nothing to most of the abductee’s, they moved onto Riker who also had a similar situation in which he owed his existence to a Q for rescuing his ancestor as well.

Harris had listened to this all from his spot by the window. He didn’t contribute anything to the conversation. He knew that whatever time traveling mischief was afoot here, his being taken was either a mistake, and he had a feeling from seeing these Q that mistakes were a rare thing, or Death was somehow involved after all.

Eventually their usefulness as...character witnesses to a trial? Harris supposed that’s what it looked like, was at an end, and Harris and the others were at last returned to their respective places in time, after the reiteration that they wouldn’t remember anything that happened.

When Harris blinked again, he was back on his back in Jeff’s tiger-striped van in 1960’s Wisconsin.

They were both as naked as before and Jeff had continued talking from the point they had been interrupted, his hands still working there magic where they had left off. Jeff didn’t appear to have realized anything had happened at all.

Harris blinked, cataloguing all this, before he leaned up and grabbed a handful of hair, pulling the other down in a rough kiss. quickly ending the foreplay before they could be potentially interrupted again.

ooo ooo ooo

Harris had developed something of a passion for the visual media, having been around to witness the post-war era of classical Hollywood, though he grew board of it when the second world war rolled around, and there was a decidedly more propaganda quality to it, though by then he had enlisted, whether out of boredom or assuaging his hero complex he wasn't sure by that point, and didn’t have much time for such entertainments beyond the occasional picture that his fellow regiment dragged him to in their off hours.

After the second world war, He started to enjoy film again, and soon came to love television once the shows became more program then commercials.
It was an odd thing to experience, enjoying the beginnings of things when knowing, at least through being informed from the progress of another reality, where things may go in the future, at least to a certain extent.

It was also through television he witnessed continuing strides in development with the "space race" reaching its peak. Along with the launch of the Ranger and Apollo spacecrafts, and humanity making its first steps on another spacial body when Neil Armstrong walks on the moon at the end of the 60's. As Harris, now Sylvester watched with an enraptured crowd through a store window. The advancement in technology, with the development of the first integrated circuit. Sylvester, now Greg, could sense something of the possibilities that both Edith Keele had espoused to her lovers and supplicants alike in the days of Henry Porter.

He had eventually left the hedonistic opulence of Woodstock, along with the varied lovers he had come to know during that glorious time of protest and Rock and Roll.

When the 70's rolled in, he chose not to enlist in the Vietnam war, and was able to avoid enlistment by the sheer fact that he wasn't technically a citizen of the US, or any country really, and found enjoyment hopping boats and working his way around the world.

In fact, by the time that NASA was formed, launching Pioneer 11 space probe, he had long left America and was enjoying the hard working though still hedonistic delights of the world at large.

Ooo ooo ooo

Redjac was hungry, always hungry.

Cold eyes traced the paths of the people huddled in their jackets walking down the heart of Kiev, in Russia.

This country had proven just as fruitful as Shanghai had been during the last time that it hungered, though the fare was a bit trickier to separate here after the first few tasty treats went down its gullet. The USSR had not been pleased by the string of 5 deaths of its most prominent citizens.

Redjac had to admit that it had been looking for a challenge, something to make the success of the hunt all the sweeter despite any annoyances or hardships that may pop up, which had influenced its class of food choice. The richest of society were the most protected after all, and their was this arrogant untouchability that was pervasive in their minds, whether small or large in presence, that added a sweeter flavor to the fear and despair when that arrogance was ripped away in its clutches.

Unfortunately, the USSR had tightened their ranks even more so, and the challenge had soon lost its appeal. This was why it was currently trolling the bitter cold streets, looking for its opportunity to strike.

To Redjac's eventual delight, one foolish soul who had been walking past it suddenly peeled off from the busy streets and disappeared into an alley.

It was a practical invitation to dinner.

Redjac's current host, a burly USSR lieutenant, peeled off from his languid pose near his dark Cadillac and slunk after the slim figure into the darkness.

The hunter moved closer and closer to its unsuspecting prey, weaving deeper and deeper into the hazardous seclusion of shadows cradled in a decay of rotting brick and slush strewn pavement mixed with garbage.
Redjac thought about how it would subdue the prey. Would it offer a subterfuge and loll him into a sense of security? Hmmm...it did add a nice spice...

Then again, it was quite famished, and while the entity could project a sense of coldness, it didn’t particularly enjoy the sensation while housed in flesh, and it was particularly bitter outside, so it decided on the direct approach was best before moving on to the next, likely warmer meal.

When Redjac was in reach, it leaped out from behind a dumpster and grabbed the oh so fragile neck of the small human male, and easily picked up the life form until he dangled by his throat from a meaty fist.

Instead of all the delicious pain and fear though, the prey dangling in its grasp just stared at him curiously and said “Well, your different.”

Redjac blinked. Frowning in confusion, then shook its prey a few times.

The human made pain noises, but for some reason Redjac was not receiving anything. Growling, the human was slammed a few times into a wall, then shoved to the ground, where Redjac pinned his limbs.

Still nothing.

Frustrated, Redjac pushed harder against the stubborn barrier between itself and its bounty.

“Your a determined little bugger arn’t you?” The human gurgled, before it shrugged its one working shoulder, and the foreign barrier between it and the meal he was after fell.

Redjac was suddenly faced with a void. A nothingness that Redjac had only glimpsed in the dead eyes of its food. A void that shouldn't exist in a still alive body, warm with heart pumping, that drew in a shaky rattling breaths.

The parasetic entity screeched as it realized to late that this wasn't prey, and tried to flee the now clinging iron grasp of the void that surged right for Redjac. It tried to get away, but it was fruitless, and screamed as with a gulp, the entity was consumed.

The green eyed man groaned as several broken bones and likely internal injuries made themselves known, sneezing slightly when the ash of his now disintegrated attacker got into his sinuses.

“You could have just let him kill me you know, now I have to go through the whole nasty business of dying from my injuries slowly. You are such an annoying git!”

The Void of Endings in the man’s mind belched contentedly.

Chapter End Notes

This chap references Star Trek: Voyager "Death Wish" S2E18 trial scene with alterations, and a character known as Redjac "was a non-humanoid life form that existed for centuries by journeying from planet to planet and feeding on the pain and fear it caused by committing serial murders." (Star Trek Wiki). it was introduced in Star Trek: TOS in S2E07 "Wolf and Fold." It was canonically mentioned to have traveled through Shanghai and Russia in Earth's past. Of course, now the events of the episode and anything else with Redjac mentioned no longer happened since Death ate
Recommendation: “Basking In Heat” by TFALokiwriter at http://archiveofourown.org/works/10939398
San Fransisco, 1988...

“It’s only for a few days Harvey,” Dr. Gillian Taylor pleaded to her dark haired student Intern, who looked at her with unimpressed green eyes behind his old fashioned round spectacles, “If I can get you to cover me at the Institute doing those damn tours, then it free’s me up to hunt down the bigger fish in the political waters and see about delaying at least another few months to give us sometime to build more money.”

Harvey Murphy grunted into his coffee, “listen Dr. Taylor, I respect you and your work, but you know as well as I do that the board is not going to delay the release of George and Gracie...” his voice trailed off as he bit his lip when the diabolical woman shot him puppy dog eyes while at the same time launched into one of her usual passionate speeches.

Harvey had been a grad student working on his PhD in Marine Biology for the past year, and he had to admit that he enjoyed working at the Cetacean Institute, despite the fact that he specialized more in sea serpents then in whales. Still, he needed the credits, and the people were nice...that and it had the added benifit of boring Death silly.

Harvey sighed, eventually agreeing with her.

“Thanks Harvey, I owe you one.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Harvey shooed her away.

With a sigh he meandered out into the main foyer of the museum where, sure enough, another tourist group was forming.

“Welcome to the Cetacean Institute, the only museum dedicated solely to whales in the country...”

Harvey lead the group through the general whale info and exhibits, made sure to emphasize the destructive effect of humanity on the whale population, and was just about to lead them all to the main exhibit when one of the tourists intoned:

"To hunt a species to extinction is not logical."

Harvey turned and studied the man curiously. It was hard to judge the man’s age. He had one of those timeless faces that people sometimes get for a bit in later life, but Harvey took a shot in the dark and guessed around the man’s 50’s maybe, and certainly, and had a certain unruffled sedateness that sparked his interest. He was dressed in flowing white robes with undecipherable symbols, and a plane white bandana wrapped around his forehead and the tips of his ears. It gave him a brief pang of nostalgia, seeing those robes, before he shook it off, and decided that he must be some sort of spiritualist or something.

"Whoever said the Human race was logical?" Harvey replied with all the long, long years of an existence his youthful complexion didn’t match.

The man raised an eyebrow, Harvey raised one back.
‘Well, if you all will follow me,’’ Harvey addressed to the rest of the crowd at large, ‘‘We’ll take you to our pride and joy.’’

Harvey led the group up to the large sea water tank and droned the usual information while people oohed and ahhed over the whales swimming around, no doubt as bored as Harvey. As they left the top of the tank area, Harvey continued to talk.

“Despite all we have learned from George and Gracie, we will be soon returning them to open waters.”

A man who looked to be in his rough 60’s with curly caramel colored hair and wearing an odd red and white outfit, and looked sort of familiar to Harvey, though he couldn’t place the face, had managed to work his way to the front of the group to walk next to him, asking.

“Why’s that?”

“Well, its a lot of money to feed two whales 2 tons of shrimp everyday,” Harvey replied.

“When?” the man asked, looking concerned.

“Oh, soon, very soon,” Harvey replied vaguely, while internally adding ‘unless Gill actually manages to get that delay, but I wouldn’t bet on it.’

Harvey eventually managed to get the group gathered around the underwater observatory and began explaining whale song.

“...Of course, no one knows what they are saying to each other, but there are many theories...”

Harvey was cut off by an little old lady in a large hat who pointed at the tank and tittered, “perhaps the whales are talking to that man?”

Harvey whirled around and cursed soundly when he spotted the robed man from earlier as calm as you please swimming against Gracie’s side.

With terse command to the group to stay there, Harvey ran up the stairs, yanking off his lab coat, kicking off his shoes, one of which elicited a yelp from the red suited man that had followed directly behind him when a heel caught the fellow in the face, and dove.

There was a splash as onlookers stared agog.

After a brief moment to mentally curse at the slightly to cold temperature, Harvey kicked with sure strokes deeper and deeper into the tank, occasionally shooing away fish.

It didn’t take him long to find the man, whom, by the way, must have an amazing set of lungs to have been under for so long, leaning against the other whale’s side now.

Harvey frowned, head cocked as he observed the way the man was staring into Georgie’s right eye intently. There was something almost communal in nature about what he was seeing. Just what was this guy up to? Was he a kook or something?

Well what ever the man’s issues, this was definitely against the rules. Harvey swam closer, skillfully avoiding an errant fin, and tapped the man on the shoulder.

He turned and the two stared at each other. Harvey gestured upward with a severe look. The stranger raised an eyebrow, but capitulated to the underwater demand.
The two of them surfaced, and after reaming both of the men, who seemed entirely to interested in the whales to be normal, and entirely to suspiciously vague in their reasons, were eventually escorted from the premises by security.

One of the other grad students finished the tour and Harvey was left to change and write up the incident.

After dealing with Bob, the boss, Harvey ended his shift with a grunt of relief, climbing into his van and pulled out of the parking lot with a sigh.

To his consternation he actually stumbled across the two kooks that had disrupted his day walking along the side of the road.

The red dressed one, who had introduced himself as Kirk before he was tossed out, jabbed his swimming friend Spock.

"If we play our cards right, we may be able to find out when those whales are leaving," Harvey read from Kirk's lips as he watched the two form behind his wheel after they had spotted him.

"How will playing cards help?" Spock's lips uttered back.

Kirk waved at Harvey, who reluctantly stopped, letting the vehicle idle, “listen, I just want to...” then Kirk's eyes registered precisley what was painted on the van.

Harvey smirked proudly as he patted the frame of his window, “yeah she’s a beaut isn’t she? Painted it myself.”

“Admiral,” Spock asked curiously, “what is this single horned equine along the side? And why is it projecting disorganized rainbow patterns all over the vehicle from its horn?

Harvey couldn’t help it, as suspicious as he was, seeing their flummoxed looks was highly amusing. It actually reminded him of Gill’s reaction to his pride a joy the first time he had parked for work.

“Yeah, that would be a unicorn,” Harvey explained to the whale swimmer.

“Is there a significance to the naked men riding on its back and stroking the horn?” Spock asked curiously.

Kirk actually blushed, clearing his throat, “not now Spock, I’ll explain later. So listen,” Kirk leaned against the door of Harvey’s van, “I wanted to apologize for Spock’s earlier behavior, you see,” Kirk leaned forward, lowering his voice.

"Back in the sixties he was part of the free speech movement at Berkeley. I think he had a little too much LDS."

Harvey gave him a bland look,"LDS?"

To give “the Admiral” credit, the man never once dropped his friendly, good-ol’boy smile as he nodded.

“Ri-ighty then,” Harvey reached for the stick, “thanks and all, but I got to go.”

“Wait!” Kirk called out, gripping the door with more urgency, “look, I know this may seem really crazy from your perspective but it’s important that we know when the whales are being released.”
"Oh yeah? and why is it so important?"

"Look, there’s very little point in my trying to explain..."

Harvey snorted and answered sarcastically, "Yeah, I'll buy that," he sighed, eyeing the two men, this could be fun, he supposed, after all it had been awhile since he'd had a bit of fun, so finally said.

"Oh alright, come on, I’ll give you a lift, your just lucky I have a soft spot for entertainment value, which I suspect you all have in spades.”

Harvey took them back to San Fransisco, eyeing the hushed conversation of the two men in the back of the van, then asked curiously.

"You're not one of those guys from the military, are you? trying to teach whales to retrieve torpedoes, or some dip-shit stuff like that?"

"No, sir. No dip-shit,” Kirk answered honestly.

"Darn,” Harvey replied, more to himself then anything, “if you had been I could have just maimed you and sent you back to uncle Sam in itty-bitty pieces.’

“I believe that is an illegal action within this country and time frame,” Spock replied.

“I’m sure he’s kidding Spock,” Kirk defended.

Harvey smiled at them in the rear view mirror, humming "Clarice" under his breath.

Chapter End Notes

This chap is utilizing scenes and lines from "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" film.

The music that Harvey is humming at the end of the chap is "Clarice" from "Silence of the Lambs."

Recommendation: Closer (Fan Video) by eetstomoch at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PwpcUawjK0
A Whale of a Time, Part 2.

Chapter Notes

This chap is utilizing scenes and lines from "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" film.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Since Harvey had been busy dealing with covering for Gill that day, he decided he wasn't in the mood for waiting long for his grub, so he took a detour and pulled into the first fast food joint he saw.

He bought all three of them a burger, and was amused as he watched Spock starring in fascination at the little toy that came with his meal (at Harvey’s request).

“Some sort of 20th century iconic figure for religious purposes?” Spock queried, as he held up a plastic figurine of an anthropomorphic turtle wearing a purple mask.

Harvey took a considering sip on his chocolate milkshake, eyeing the robed fellow.

“So,” Kirk waved a fry around, “if you wont tell us when the whales are to be released, can you at least tell us why it is such a concern?”

“Well,” They’re host took another sip, then lowered his drink, leaning forward with his fingers steepled, “there are two reasons. The first is because the whales came into our care when they were calves and grew up almost exclusively in captivity. Releasing them back into the wild after spending most of their formative years in the relative safety of a tank means that they have no concept of what to expect once released. The second, is that they will be in as much danger, if not more so, from whalers.”

“I see,” Kirk said severely.

A few bites of silence, then seemingly randomly, while fiddling with the arms of his prize, Spock proclaimed, “Gracie is pregnant.”

Harvey just managed to avoid choking on his drink while Kirk groaned at Spock’s lack of tact.

“Hell,” Harvey wheezed, taking another fortifying sip, “how the hell did you know that!?”

“Um...” Kirk scrambled for a believable excuse

“Gracie informed me,” Spock replied calmly, carefully taking the tiny plastic fighting staff and placing it in the toy’s hand, “fascinating.”

Harvey leaned back, his arms crossed and eyed the more coherent of the two men before him. “Ok fellas just who are you really? And no jerking me around,” a pause, “unless I invite it of course.”

“We can’t tell you that,” Kirk replied, wincing when the vibrancy of those green eyes behind those silver square lenses turned up a notch, “but let me finish! I can tell you that we are not in the military, and we intend no harm towards the whales. In fact, we may be able to even help you, though in ways you couldn’t possibly imagine.”
Harvey snorted, “If you really knew me Ketchup Stains,” Kirk cursed and wiped a bit of the condiment from his chest, “you would find that statement reversed.”

Kirk still seemed unsure, so Harvey leaned forward and added a little harmless enticement.

“You know, we aren’t going to be completely cutting ties with our two special mammals,” Harvey nonchalantly said, “we have implanted a tracer into the whales so we can at least keep track of their movements...only a select group from the institute have the code to the signal of course.”

“And you wouldn’t be interested in telling me those codes?” Kirk drawled. Clearly Kirk sensed the trap, but was interested, despite himself.

“Ye-ep.”

Kirk let out a frustrated growl.

“Excuse me,” Spock interrupted, finally distracted from his little souvenir, which had disappeared into his robes, “but it seems to me that perhaps an exchange of information on both parties would befit the outcome.”

Harve leaned forward, “Got it nail on the head Happymeal.”

“I am no a happy meal, I am a V-muph!”

Kirk covered Spock's mouth, shooting him a glare, before removing his hand and turning back to Harve with a determined look, obviously having come to a decision.

“Fine, we will answer whatever you want to know after you tell us when the whales are leaving, and the code for the tracers.”

“Au contrare Mon Curly Hair,” Harvey said in a mocking faux french accent and held up a finger, “you will tell me what I want to know first, and if I think it is a damn good reason to risk my career and the whales in giving you classified information, then I might consider answering you.”

Kirk groaned, but the young man did have them painted in a corner. Those tracers would make the already spotty tech of his current vessel easier to utilize with less damage to the whales.

“Alright then,” Kirk grunted, “but your not going to believe this.”

“Well, if I don’t I am sure that it is going to be at least somewhat entertaining.”

"Okay, the truth,” Kirk cleared his throat, “I am from, what on your calendar, would be the 23rd Century. I have come back in time to retrieve a pair of humpback whales in attempt to repopulate the species.”

There was a moment of silence, and as it stretched, Kirk felt his surety rise in that the young man was going to back away from the crazy spacemen slowly.

Harve leaned back in his chair and took one long swallow of his drink before he finally said “Well OK, that’s a relatively good reason.”

“Relative how?” Spock asked curiously, while Kirk blinked slowly, unsure if he was grasping the reaction right.

“Well, the purpose really, I mean, if you were really here to help repopulate the species in the future for whatever reason, You would have grabbed more then one mated pair...unless there is
more of you coming?"

“There is not,” Spock agreed, “that is a very logical conclusion.”

“Logical?!” Kirk gaped, “We just told him that we are from the future and he doesn’t even bat an eyelash?!”

Harvey ignored Kirk, “so I take it that their is an alternative reason for the whales?”

“Indeed,” Spock nodded, “The Earth of our time is under an unintentional attack by a probe of advanced technology whose communication signal is causing dangerous side effects to our world. The probe, we believe, comes from an alien race whom colonized the planet millions of years ago with and have become the humpback whales of today. Unfortunately, they become extinct by the 21st century, and thus there is no one to communicate back to the probe and potentially make it cease.”

“Ah,” Harvey nodded, “that actually makes better sense.”

“Really?” Kirk asked dubiously.

“Hmmm...” Harvey hummed, grabbing another milkshake, butter pecan this time, yum!.

He put down his shake and eyed the two men with a determined look.

“Look, I got a deal for you. Your story could be a fish tail, a very elaborate insanity, or the truth. I highly doubt its a joke, because anyone who knows me enough to even try would already know that is a really bad idea. So, lets say I’m not not disbelieving the idea of time travel for the sake of self preservation, just leery of your veracity as time travelers in and of yourselves.”

“Fascinating,” Spock intoned leaning forward with academic interest, “You believe in what by rights would be still considered fiction in this time, and only doubt the parties involved.”

“Well I suppose,” Harv hummed, "but anyway, lets get to the meat of the issue gentlemen,” he picked up another milkshake, mint Oreo this time.

"I have a sure fire way that we can resolve this little issue and everyone gets what they want,” - Slurp!- “take me to your space ship, if that’s what you used of course, and once I see it, then those codes are yours...and just to give you a bit of incentive," he paused, giving them an evil little smirk around his straw, "George and Gracie are already on their way to the Atlantic as we speak.”

Kirk swore, Harvey continued to enjoy his shake, Butter Pecan really was the best, but this was a close second, since Butter Pecan will always reminded him of Treacle Tart, he mused with nostalgic fondness.

After the two men had a whispered conversation between them, Harvey noticed Kirk’s shoulders slump in defeat.

“Very well,” the man sighed, “you have a deal.”

Kirk suddenly pulled out a small device from somewhere, and with a cheerful chirp, a Scottish brogue filled the small booth.

“Yes sir?”

“Scotty, 3 to beam up from my location.”
“Aye sir.”

The first thing Harvey said, after finding himself suddenly surrounded by grungy, but definitely high tech scenery was “Whoo! that tingles!”

Kirk frowned, oddly disappointed that the seemingly backwards early example of humanity wasn't freaked out or at least amazed at suddenly being transported from a restaurant booth to some other location. What was up with this kid?

“Now that you’ve seen the proof that we are who we say we are can we have those codes-ouch hey!” Kirk yelped as he was suddenly slapped upside the head by their 20th century guest.

Harvey had his fists on his hips looking annoyed, “Your an idiot! Seriously! You just aparated-”

“Transported,” The Scottish gentlemen named Scotty corrected.

“- Sorry, transported, us from the middle of a public place where anyone could witness three men suddenly disappearing! Seriously?! Do any of you morons contemplate the sanctity of the timeline? Are you just looking to wipe yourselves from the face of history or something? Seriously, is this the first time any of you have done this?”

“Actually, this isn’t the first time we have traveled back in time,” Spock chose to enlighten, only to raise a brow when the young male raised his hands again and let out a “Gah!”

Scotty coughed, deciding to keep his little contribution of adding transparent aluminum to the timeline to himself. Besides, he was reasonably certain it would take that Nichols fellow awhile to figure out the formula, and he was sure that the creator had a name that started with an ”N”.

No one but Spock heard the muffled “I’m surrounded by bloody children!” under his breath, making the robed man cock an eyebrow curiously.

Still, Harv he had made a deal, and even if they were blundering morons, he liked to think himself a man of his word.

He did as promised, and they logged in the code into their computer, which easily located the two whales.

Harvey finally let his hidden smile curl his lips upwards, barring teeth. Oh yes, things had finally gotten interesting again...his eyes trailing to a familiar, though slightly older face that he remembered from so many decades ago joined them in the transporter room, a man who introduced himself as Dr. Leonard McCoy, or Bones for short.

Not the first Time Traveling indeed.

Ooo ooo ooo

It had taken them longer then he was comfortable with finally snagging the whales, fortunately before they could be killed by Whalers, a near fatal delay mainly due to the little snag of getting Pavlov out of a 20th century hospital and military custody before he died.

Harvey, after helping them retrieve Pavlov, flirted with every single one of the flabbergasted time travelers, and had left the ship before they had taken off, ambling down a ramp, and had disappeared from sight quickly while the group had turned to dealing with last minute details, no one bothering to see him to the edge of the park, where the cloaked ship was currently resting.
The trip back to his proper time had been bumpy, as much as one can call time travel that, but the landing even bumpier, though Kirk supposed he should count his blessings that they crashed into the ocean instead of the dessert or something.

Right now, the whales were free and swimming. The probe had finally left, thus the Earth was saved, and he and his crew were currently treading water, clinging to a slowly sinking Klingon ship as Starfleet set about sending a shuttle to rescue them, which was coming within eye range.

Despite the success of the mission and the danger now being over, he couldn’t help but wonder what exactly what had happened in those final frantic moments.

After they had crashed, he had been certain Scotty had been stuck in the cargo bay with the whales as it filled quickly with water. But by the time he scrambled to save his friend, the doors were unsealed and Scotty was scrambling out, heading towards him, looking confused.

Scotty had been distressed about the fact that the hatch to release the whale was stuck, leaving only the manual override, under water and fill with debris no less, and thus hard to get to to open it.

Kirk had been all set to dive in, but before he could take a breath, a sudden wrench of the ship and the sound of equalizing pressures, then the vision of the whales disappearing from view through the clear sides of the makeshift tank, had made the action suddenly and abruptly unnecessary, so Kirk had ran off after Scotty and joined the others in witnessing the whales surface in there new home with there freshly born new baby.

Kirk was brought out of his revere when suddenly something reached from below the water and dragged him under.

Kirk spluttered, struggling, then just as suddenly he was released.

Kirk came back to the surface coughing, then spluttered for a totally different reason when a familiar head of dark black hair and vibrant green eyes surfaced right behind him, laughing at his gobsmacked expression.

“Harvey?!” Kirk practically shrieked, “wha-how?!”

The cheeky bastard winked, drawling, "you really should escort pretty things such as myself all the way home," a finger tapping his chin, "You never know what sort of busy unattended entrance ways into invisible ships could be snuck into once out of sight," a wicked smirk and splashed Kirk in the face.

Ooo ooo ooo

Several hours later...

Harvey had to admit, the brigs of the future didn’t look to different from the past really, though the force-field was certainly swanky.

Harvey was vastly amused by the kerfuffle that his appearance caused. Squawks about the preservation of timeline and such and such, which was rather rich considering.

He knew that his ability to stay within this time period was under heavy debate, though part of what was staying their hand was the fact that no one really knew how to deal with the whales that had suddenly become so important to keeping the probe off their backs, and Harvey, while a grad student with a preference for water snakes, was still the closet they had to an expert.
After they had all separated to give their statements on the events in Harvey’s timeline, he hadn’t honestly expected to see any of them so soon, so he was somewhat intrigued when he spotted Spock, in a fresh new set of robes, entered his cell with a nod to the security officer.

Spock took a seat beside Harv at the inviting pat.

“I like your look better this way,” Harvey hummed, eyeing Spock's now exposed pointed ears, reminding him of that fellow he had seen in his last trip through time, “its actually rather fetching.”

“Indeed,” Spock intoned, bland but not denying it either, which amused Harry, since he rather thought that the fellow didn't catch the flirtation. He grinned, how adorable.

“I have recently taken the time during my repast on meditating on the conundrum that you have presented,” Spock said finally, “I cannot help but conclude that you are no ordinary 20th century young student.”

“Oh really Mr. Sexy Ears, enlighten me,” Harvey hummed, leaning his chin against a closed fist as he posed artfully.

“Very well,” Spock said, “I first came to my suspicions when I noticed your relaxed attitude to the story of time travel and and space travel both. You did not act in anyway condescending or hurmouing, as one would an insane person. Further, your attitude at confirmation of the story once on board the ship and after being beamed from one place to another was also not surprising to you. The next thing, not very subtly mind you, was when you asked Doctor Bones in the Shuttlecraft if he was still having issues with assassins and what happened to his blue pajamas.”

Spock adjusted his robe, pulling out a compad from the folds of his sleeves.

“In an effort to clarify who you are, we did a facial recognition in the computer data banks, which has matched to a single still image, one of the rare ones still in existence, with the author of the popular Dixon Hill mystery series created in the 1930’s, leading many to surmise that you are a descendant of the author.”

“So?”

“So your relaxed state with the idea of time travel and space ships, the fact that you bear a 100% match to the author, impossible even for a direct descendant, the fact that you recognized Bones and referenced an earlier point in his history when he went back in time in his uniform raving about assassins due to an accidental overdose of a medication to a point when you logically couldn’t have been alive given your appeared age suggests that not only have you meant us previously, but that you yourself are either remarkably preserved, or a time traveler yourself.”

Harvey chuckled, “Well your a smart one, though I suppose I wasn’t really hiding it well. Very well Mr. Spock, you are right on both counts: I indeed did meet Dr. Bones, briefly. I was the one who found him wandering around raving, and I took him to a shelter run by an old girlfriend of mine and never really thought about him again until I saw him again on the ship. I admittedly didn’t even know anything about him being a time traveler back then. Your also correct that I am not surprised by space ships and time travel. I have had...one brief encounter before with time travling. Though I can’t say anything more about that since its a little beyond your time frame, and I don’t want to frag stuff up for them.”

Spock steepled his fingers in thought.

“You realize that your being here may have also affected the time stream?”
“Perhaps,” Harvey agreed, “I know, it sounds hypocritical. But...well, hell okay, no excuse I guess, other then I was tired of the 80’s. I want to see what this new time frame has to offer. I should also point out Sexy Ears that I can disappear at any time, and all your vaunted tech would not be able to find me. Me even being in this cell is a courtesy.”

Spock again raised an eyebrow and Harvey again raised one back.

After a moment of silence, Spock finally said.

"Then I would like to offer a suggestion..."

Chapter End Notes

Recommendation: "Darkness in the Void" by phoenix catcher at https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5084812/1/Darkness-in-the-Void
"Are you truly sure that you want to do this?"

The speaker, a cowled and robed figure of a man stood in the deep recesses of one of the most ancient temples on the planet Vulcan, eying the slighter robed figure that was sitting cross-legged on a stone platform in meditation pose.

"Of course I do," the sitting figure replied, amusement in his voice, "You know me better then anyone currently alive Sexy Ears, when have you known me to second guess any of my decisions?"

"Many times," the first speaker replied dryly.

"Oh...well, this isn’t one of them. Besides," tone turning mischievous, "I think the elders will be glad to see the back of me."

"As fascinating as you are to them, you are also equally...disruptive to them," The other agreed.

"A few practical jokes..." the siting figure hummed.

"The entire council was bald for a month."

"I thought Ambassador Sarek looked quite fetching bald..." the other mused fondly.

"...And the hot mustard in the communal tea? The newborn that now bears the name Fluffy, the blue dye in the central temple fountain?"

"Oh posh!," the sitting figure waved a dismissive hand, "I keep those old codgers on their toes, admit it."

"There was also the matter of you- what do you call it? ‘hitting’ on nearly all of the temple residents."

"So I am a little flirty..."

"Its not your...flirtiness that is the issue, it was your successes that caused some...argument," the tone was disproving, "particularly among the novices.".

"Yep! And almost all of those without the excuse of Pon Farr," The sitting figure stated proudly, back straightening.

"That is not something to be proud of!" the standing figure groused with a hint of aggravation, which was saying something, given that he was a Vulcan.

"I didn’t hear you or your wife complain, man the three of us really hit that Klingon blood wine hard that night didn't we? what was it? 20, 30 years ago?" a fond chuckle, "You both took me along to give the elders a break to Kronos on a diplomatic mission?".

The other shifted under his cowl, "Yes, well...the point is that the...habits that decades of strict Vulcan discipline has not worn down may meet its match under the strict rules of conduct needed
to be a Star Fleet officer...”

“Oh please, I read Kirk’s files, hell I saw him for myself! and that was when he was just coming past his prime!”

Another awkward cough, “yes, well Jim was rather...unique,”

“That’s an understatement,” the other mused appreciativey.

“But that was in a different time, these days Starfleet has become much more rigid in its conduct, and will not tolerate certain attitudes.”

A brief few minutes of silence, then.

“I’m not going to change my mind old friend.”

“Very well,” a deep sigh, “I will make the arrangements, what name would you like to use for the records?”

The other contemplated for a time, before musing "It has been awhile...yes, why not? to mark the occasion, maybe it will be luckier then it originally was this time around...or maybe I'm just being sentimental in my old age."

Silence returned after the visitor left, request and new name in tow. As the sitting figure continued his meditation, a smile played in the shadows of his cowl. He looked out of the corner of his eye, spying his eternal companion, who looked ridiculously pleased and was flapping its wings in joy for finally something to do. Not that he was doing this for its amusement, oh no.

Eyes trailed down to the com-pad in his lap, which contained a report on, and the blue prints to, a new Starfleet vessel that was just in the beginning of its construction.

The USS Voyager.

Ooo ooo ooo

2366, Starfleet Academy Dorms...

Harry S.L Kim felt his chest swell with pride as he stared up at the golden insignia of Starfleet, with the blazoned motto "Ex astra, scientia" etched into the edifice, gleaming in the light of the waning sun as it set behind the sprawling city line of Chicago.

He was a day early, but he just couldn’t wait at his parents place any longer.

His straightened is pressed red cadet uniform, and marched forward across the sprawling grounds of the campus proper.

He took in the tall towers and round topped environmental domes. The looming megalith of the Academy Stadium sprawled out before him in all its glory. It was precisely how the images in his Starfleet Issue Introduction manual depicted it.

The dorms were located on the other end of the main entrance of campus. Harry could have beamed in of course, but he had wanted to take in as much of the campus as he could. It was actually almost peaceful really as there weren't to many wandering the grounds. Current students still on campus would likely be in a mess right about now (those that weren’t out hitting the town) and thus Harry had much of the grounds relatively to himself along the trek.
Finding his assigned room was also not difficult. The dorms supervisor was a friendly Bolian by the name of Shoon, who not only provided him with his room codes and the rules (the later of which he had already memorized in preparation), but also provided what must have been the bulk of the current rumor mill surrounding other student and faculty.

Eventually the supervisor petered off and chortled.

“Well would you listen to be go on and on about Admiral Stampy’s granddaughter when you are likely looking to get into your dorm for a little bite to eat! Well no worries there young man! Why when your roommate moved in yesterday, I made sure the power and the replicators were working spit sharp, yes indeed!”

That caught Harry’s attention.

“Wait, my roommate is already here?” Harry asked curiously.

To be honest, he had no idea what to expect in regards to a roommate, as they were usually assigned based on a set of criteria that was developed based on a personality based subroutine derived from Pyche evaluations a standard Earth week before cadets were due to arrive.

Kim understood some of the mentality behind not bothering to reveal whom would be rooming with whom. Often times, when assigned to a ship you would be working with complete strangers for months, even years on end, with little foreknowledge of what to expect from your crewmates, so why not foster this mentality of adaptability early?

Personally, Kim would have liked a little more autonomy in his roommate.

His father had waxed nostalgic about the wild parties that he and his roommates used to have during the time that he was a Cadet. The late nights, the copious Romulan ale, the late, late nights hitting Rigelian dance clubs and Nausican Cage matches.

Harry shivered in horror at the many, many regulations his father broke in his youth.

Harry in contrast was a bit reserved, having worked hard to get where he was now. It was safe to say that Kim had a passion for Starfleet. He admired the ideals of the service, and aspired to be a part of the most active force in the Federation, whose ideals he shared and wished to protect.

He shifted his feet outside door A-005 nervously. He wanted to be able to have a comrade who shared in his ideals of service, or at the very least would not be so rowdy as to interfere with his studies.

With a deep breath, he tapped in his door code and with a soft shwoop! The entrance slid open, revealing a rather ordinary standard set of starfleet issue dormitory. It had grayish walls and carpet, recessed shelves for research materials which were currently empty, a recessed bunk bed, with plain grayish-purple linens. There was also a small eating area with a plain table and two chairs, a replicator, and two doors on the wall opposite to Kim that the cadet suspected likely lead to a closet and a bathroom respectively.

He stepped in, looking around himself, breathing in the stark atmosphere happily.

Despite the fact that his roommate seemed to have already arrived, the other cadet hadn't seemed to have done anything with the place to indicate his presence, so taking the opportunity, Kim claimed the bottom bunk for his own, placing his round plastimetal carry-all on the mattress, and flopped back to test the comfort.
Suddenly, an aggravated reptilian hiss erupted from the pillow next to Harry’s head.

Slowly, he turned his head, and there, curled up on the plump pillow nose to nose with him, was a rather annoyed looking snake.

In any other instance, Kim would have noticed that the snake was rather beautiful with its golden red and amber striped scales, but Kim was rather preoccupied with the finger-length pearly white fangs.

Harry froze in place, barely breathing. Thoughts like:

‘Oh God! I can’t believe it ends this way!’ and ‘How the hell did a snake get into Cadet dorms? running through his panicked skull.

He was contemplating whether making a dash for it was a smart move, or wait for the serpent to get bored of him, when a symbilant tenor chuckled from across the room, the faint scent of apple shampoo and steam following him out of the bathroom.

Kim’s new roommate came to stand over the petrified Kim, a towel wrapped tightly around his waist, and a tsk on his lips.

“Potato! Really is that anyway to greet our new roommate?”

The snake immediately stopped threatening Kim and turned towards the second human. It gave what Kim would later swear was a rather cranky hiss, pointing at him with the tip of its tail at him.

“Yes, well, it can’t be helped, he didn’t know you were there, now come on, let the poor bloke move,” the fellow chided.

A lightly muscled deeply tanned arm came into Kim’s view and was calmly held out to the serpent, which gave a few sullen hisses before slithering up the offered appendage and settling around the man’s neck.

Kim slid off the bed and got to his feet.

The young man with the snake rubbed the back of his messy black hair awkwardly, and held out his hand.

“I’m sorry about Potato, he can be a bit pushy sometimes, I’m Harry Potter.”

Kim took it automatically to shake and replied “I’m Harry Kim.”

Potter gave a snort of amusement, “perhaps we should call each other by are last name or something? It could get a bit confusing to call each other by are first names, especially since we’ll be living together for a few years...say you want me to replicate you some tea? you look a bit peaky.”

“Uh sure, that’s fine but...” Kim gestured to Potter’s lean chest, bare and still dripping with water from his earlier shower.

“Oh! Oops! Sorry about that, I forgot!” Potter bopped his head, and padded back into the bathroom, talking through the partially open door, “I’m sorry about that, I keep forgetting that some people still have a discomfort with public undress, though I don’t see why, it doesn’t really seem overly logical.”
“That sounds kind of Vulcan,” Kim commented, turning to his carry all, "though i don't think they indulge in public nudity." His other things would be transported to his new quarters as soon as he sent his parents the quardenates, so he didn't have much to unpack, “What bunk do you want?”

“Oh, I’m not picky," Potter replied, "and Yeah not much public nudity, though embarressment over something like your body is beyond them, trust me, i would know, given how long i've lived on their homeworld.”

Kim raised an impressed brow, "really? i always heard it can be difficult for humans to live long term on Vulcan, though some still do."

Vulcan has a considerably higher gravity, thinner atmosphere, and higher temperatures than Earth. Its climate was generally harsher, with most of the surface consisting of large deserts or mountain ranges, along with a few scattered small seas.

Few humans willingly chose to live on the planet full time, and usually unless they married a Vulcan or were required to stay there out of duty, it was not the first place to settle.

It certainly explained the wiry muscles and the deep tan though.

“Potato is from there as well, “ the cheerful voice continued from the bathroom, “found him while I was waiting out a sandfire storm and there he was, the last egg in an abandoned nest, a late hatcher. Of course, my caretakers weren’t pleased. I don’t know what bothered them more, the fact that it is a Dune Viper or the the undignified name.”

Kim nearly choked on his own spit. He had memorized information on the most powerful founding members of the Federation, particularly the inter-species visitor pamphlets, one of which outlined the deadliest species common to Vulcan, and thus to watch out for them. Dune Vipers are some the most poisonous creatures on the planet.

“-Yeah, they were keen on ordering me to take him to get his venom sacks,” the other intoned ruefully.

Kim breathed a sigh of relief.

After Kim had unpacked what few belongings he had brought with him, and Potter, who didn’t have much with him and had just tossed into a closet without a care, decided to stay in instead of going to mess, and took advantage of the time to talk and get to know each other.

They both found that they had a love for music, though Potter was more into singing and playing the occasional Vulcan harp as opposed to Kim who couldn't sing very well and preferred playing the clarinet, but the notion that they could perform a duet if they wanted to, pleased Kim greatly.

Potter was also fairly active, though his type of sport was the aerial variety, like Space Diving, hang gliding and Anti-grav polo. All of which, particularly the first, made him a little green.

Kim was interested to note that Potter’s specialty lay in Xenobiology, particularly reptilian species, which explained the snake. Potter was definitely heading towards the blue uniform, as opposed to Kim who was interested in navigation and astrometrics.

Overall, as they talked long into the night and eventually retired to get up early for the first day of classes, Kim felt that having a roommate probably wasn’t going to be as bad as he thought.

Chapter End Notes
As you can see, Harry has reclaimed his old name, and is starting to sync up with one of the series that I chose to base HP into.

Just pretend that Voyager takes the amount of time for the sake of plot convenience to build.

Starfleet Academy, 2367...

Harry Potter chortled when he spotted Kim leaning against the door to their dorm with a dopey grin on his face.

He shook his head when he noticed that the look was directed at the dorm across from theirs. Lyndsey Ballard must have emerged at some point. Harry rolled his eyes and prodded his roommate out of his sordid daydreams (or as sordid as they could get, given that this was Harry Kim after all, Harry was sure Kim bought his fantasy’s dinner first or something), and dragged Kim inside their quarters with an eye roll.

He tossed his shoes in some little corner and padded over to the replicator and ordered, “Tea, tolik, hot, and a small loaf of kreyla with sweet butter.”

Harry breathed in the fruity/spicy scent of his favorite drink with a gusty sigh, biting into the warm yeasty bread, letting the sweet butter melt in his mouth and commingle the three flavors for a time before swallowing. While he may have gotten a bit...rambunctious during his time with the Vulcan’s, that didn’t mean he didn’t take to any of the teachings. One of the random lessons that stuck had been a respectful meditation on food as a form of study in textual sensation.

When he swallowed, he raised an eyebrow as Kim absently ordered himself a hot bowl of vanilla ice-cream. Which the replicator gamely tried to provide. Harry laughed at Kim’s expression when he spooned it into his mouth.

Kim grimaced, effectively back in reality, deposing of his wrecked snack and replicating himself
the correct and properly cold bowl of vanilla ice cream.

“You realize that it's a bit...stalkerish to change up your class schedule to match our currently oblivious neighbor right?” Harry commented casually as the two ate at their small table "Honestly, your wooing tactics need a bit of polishing."

Kim sniffed indignantly, and defended “well it worked, I’ll have you know that Lyndsey invited me ice skating this weekend after Quantum Mechanics.”

Harry raised a brow, “oh really, well congratulations on a successful campaign, don’t forget to invite me to the wedding.”

Kim spluttered.

“Oh,” Harry added absently, tossing the rest of his loaf in the direction of Potato, who snapped it out of the air and retreated back under Kim’s bed, ‘I’m sure good ol’ MacCalister, Lyndsey's roommate and the Federation's most rabid study-holic in the quadrant, who agreed to squeeze out tutoring you in Quantum Chemistry out of the goodness of his heart in what I am sure is a galactic miracle for that same day, and MacCalister-don’t-dare-waste-my-time agreed to reschedule?”

Harry chortled when Kim groaned and bonked his head against the back of the plushy chair that Kim’s mother had given them for Christmas. What a choice, the girl he had been lusting after since day one at the academy giving him the time of day, or the boy he desperately needed to pass a mandatory class who was notoriously stingy with his help?

Personally, Harry also needed tutoring in Quantum Mechanics, but he also needed help in his Bolian linguistics (just because he was dirt old didn't make him automatically a genius) and Lyndsey spoke it. Harry rubbed his chin thoughtfully, he wondered if he could arrange a little study-date session? That would certainly solve everyone's problem. Everyone can learn, Kim got a chance at his girl, and maybe Harry could get MacCallister interested in a little one-on-one transwarp theory.

Harry smirked as pulled out his homework.

Ooo ooo ooo

New San Fransico, The Pach, 2368...

Harry Kim couldn’t believe that he was doing this.

Potter, unlike Harry meanwhile was looking composed, actually almost bored really, making Harry shoot his friend a rather sour expression.

“I can’t believe how calm you are!” Harry whisper-growled, mindful of the crowd that lay behind the lowered curtain in front of them, “I can’t believe that you talked me into this!”

Potter huffed a laugh at his nervous roommate, who had every right to be nervous, given the setting.

Harry finished cleaning his clarinet, hands moving automatically through the motions after years of doing so, and eventually finished while still hissing quietly in consternation at the amused green eyed cadet. He eventually stopped his berating and settled the instrument to his lips as the rowdy sounds escalated on the other side of the suddenly fragile looking faded silver cloth.

An enormous old Klingon woman Yush, the owner of the Pach, a somewhat prosperous though
seedy Klingon tavern, tromped up to them.

“Well, are you ready?”

“Um…” Harry uttered intelligently, while Potter smirked, all teeth, and gave the thumbs up.

‘Good! You start now!”

The curtain began to rise, and Potter, dressed in Klingon armor he had replicated, strode brazenly into the spotlight still with a fierce teeth-bared grin and straight back. Harry tried to let his own discomfort with his own Klingon attire and tried not to reveal his nervousness to the 50 plus drunk Klingons staring at them under a spotlight.

Harry allowed himself a slight breath, then glumly put his instrument to his lips and began the opening notes, calling the warriors to quietness and attention for all the good it did. The sudden dramatically loud snick of metal against metal certainly worked though, as Potter drew a pair of mek'leth and the gleam of light reflecting off the curved blades as he held them raised above his head, which quickly caught everyone's attention.

Then Potter winked at the crowd, and began to sing. His voice carried well, with a surprising amount of power for such a scrawny guy by Klingon standards, and Harry had to reluctantly admit, while it wasn't Harry's most ideal performance venue, his roommate had a gift for making Aktuh and Maylota, which sounded rather dreadful to many other species including most humans, actually sound half-way decent.

After 38 minutes, the aria was finally over and the cadets were able to slip out to the vigorous cheers from the crowd, a bottle of a good strong Bloodwine as their payment, before the clientele soon devolved into a full out brawl, as was usual.

“That's the last time you drag me into settling one of your bets!” Harry grunted, waving the dusty bottle of alcohol around, “I thought I was going to die when that Klingon threw that smaller Klingon at the stage!”

“Well, Aktuh and Maylota does have a reputation for firing up a warrior's blood,” Potter mused, “I don't know what your so miffed about, the Klingons were polite enough to not rip at our innards.”

"We wouldn't have been there in the first place if you hadn't been gambling and begged me to help to satisfy your lost bet!” Harry growled."

Potter laughed, "You are such a "by the book" Kim, you need to relax more. You know what I think?” Potter poked Harry's chest, "I think your dander is up because I, a lowly cadet, dared to play poker with a superior officer.”

"Of course I'm upset!” Harry snapped, "you dragged an admiral into our quarters, to play poker! at 03:00 in the morning!"

Potter hummed, "who knew that man was such a card shark? Excellent in the sack to."

Kim sighed at his friend's unapologetic air and gave up, "How is he even supposed to know that we fulfilled your stupid bet anyway?” Harry grumbled as he hugged his clarinet case to his chest.

Potter took the bottle from Kim and eyed the label appreciatively, "nice year, and to answer your question, that was caught on holocamera, Yush is a friend of...the Admiral's," Harry didn't notice the way Potter's eyes shifted slightly on that proclamation.
Harry groaned, great now there was physical evidence of his part in something that had likely...no, he was sure, had broken so many rules!

Potter patted Harry's shoulder, "Well you did gain something from this."

Harry frowned, "what could I have gained from THAT experience?!"

Potter leaned in close to Harry and whispered into his ear.

"That your arse looks spectacular in silver metal and black leather."

Potter cackled as Harry chased him the rest of the way back to the Academy.

Ooo ooo ooo

2370, Russia...

Harry Kim laughed as he stumbled on his ice skates, having managed a rather shaky figure eight.

Lyndsey was clapping her hands and manfully refraining from laughing at her friend’s impression of a newborn colt.

“You really should just try learning this in a Holodeck with the safeties on instead of me having to teach you,” the young woman chided, as she took his arm and helped to guide him to the bench at the edge of the small pond.

The cadets were currently attending to a shuttle piloting final in New Moscow, and Lyndsey had an elderly uncle that had agreed to host Harry, Potter, and Lyndsey for the month that they were assigned there.

Harry stumbled over a rock protruding through the ice and only Lyndsey’s impressive reflexes kept him from falling flat on his face.

Harry suddenly found himself in close quarters, his chest pressed close to Lyndsey, practically a breath from their noses touching. The moonlight shone on her short chestnut colored hair, and brought out the warm darkness of her dark chocolate eyes.

Both of them suddenly blushed and began to dis-tangle, with Lyndsay taking a step back and slapping his shoulder briskly, “Careful their Kim, I’m usually the clumsy one in this relationship, come on, lets go inside and warm up with hot cocoa and some PB and J sandwiches.”

After changing into warm and dry cloths the two cadets settled in front of a small viewing screen and began watching mystery holovids, both of them speculating companionably about the “who-done-it.”

It was passed 24:00 hrs when the entrance to the small living quarters slid open to reveal Potter. Lyndsey looked towards the entrance then shrieked when she happened to notice that Potter was half frozen and covered head to toe in blood.

Potter, shaking off the ice from his limbs in the welcoming heat of indoors, cocked his head at the shriek and dumbfounded pale looks of the other two, before shrugging and meandering over to a nearby chair close to the fire and flopping down ungraciously.

The two rushed over to Potter, scanners out, and curses falling from Lyndsay’s lips as she realized that their combadges were in the next room. Lyndsey was about to run for them when Harry
grabbed her wrist, halting her.

"Harry! What are you doing!? We have to-!" Lynsey's frantic scramble to try to help was halted by the suddenly suspicious look that Harry shot his way to calm looking roommate.

"Well?" Harry growled.

"Well what?" Potter hummed, frowning as he reached for a nearby butter knife and began picking blood from under his finger nails.

"What happened!?" Lyndsey burst out, "and why are you two so blase' about this!!"

Potter blinked, looked down at himself and sighed, "Merlin, looks worse in light proper doesn't it?"

Seeing that the two other cadets looked like they were about to bust a vein, he shrugged and leaned back, "I was in a pie eating contest if you must know."

Harry and Lyndsey blinked.

"Oh yes, it really was quite spectacular!" Potter enthused, "Yesterday I was browsing the local club scene, chatting up this Bolian. Unfortunately, he was only impressed by big eaters, and there happened to be this Andorian who had her eye on him as well, so she challenged me to an eating contest. I couldn't just let a challenge like that go of course."

Harry groaned.

"Anyway, we agreed to meet up this evening. It was quite a crowd I tell you! This ferengi set up this pretty sweet little betting pool on a whole bunch of probabilities, it never ceases to amaze me what factors into probabilities in gambling...oh right," Potter chuckled at their looks, "Any way, the Bolian -Merlin what was his name again? Jaff? Kaff? - got to choose the food. He has a thing for Terran pastries it turns out, so there before me and my competitor was a giant pile of pie!"

"So this isn't blood after all?" Lyndsey asked hopefully, "Cherry?"

"Oh, no, the pies were blueberry, this is blood," Potter waved a dismissive hand.

"Well, we started going at it of course, and I have to admit, she was spectacular! She ate those pies like one would breath air! she made it look effortless!" Potter wore a brief dreamy expression, "anyway, things would have looked bad for yours truly. She was definitely a champ eater, and, while I enjoy many pleasurable excesses-"

Harry snorted, "that's an understatement."

"-Gorging on food is not one of them. Fortunately for me, my competitor had a few enemies it turns out, and said enemy rigged one of the pies with an explosive. She took a bite, it activated, and well..." Potter gestured to himself in a silent voila!.

Harry rubbed his temples while Lyndsey stared at him goggle-eyed.

"Welp," Potter slapped his legs, "I need to get into something more comfortable, I want to be clean before I report to Starfleet security anomalously about the crispy burned out hole filled with dead bodies, ta!"

Lyndsey stared after Potter until the door to the spare room that he was sharing with Harry during their visit closed. She opened her mouth to say something, then closed it, not really knowing what
Harry meanwhile did the only logical thing he could think of. He returned to the couch, dragging Lyndsey with him and turned on the holovid and tried very hard to block the past 10 minutes from his mind.

Ooo ooo ooo

_The Pach, One Month Before Graduation..._

"tlq moq! HoS nongtaHghachwlj! 'Iw pub!"

Harry, in nothing but plain leathers, stamped his foot with each syllable, pounding his chest with alternate closed fists, green eyed gaze staring intently into the crowd.

"Hoch pub 'oH noH!"

Harry reached behind his back and unsheathed a gigantic broadsword, he raised it above his head letting out a rather deep and thunderous roar for such a scrawny frame, then plunged the sword, gleaming in the stage-light, into the worn plasti-wood below. He leaned on the blade at parade rest, eyes gazing out at the enraptured eyes, his voice cooled into a ragged whisper.

"Hoch jISuv, jISuv nIteb jIH moq! tlhuH Qav pum jagh, law' vIta'"

Harry straightened, jutting out his chest and chin, head thrown back and gave everyone a toothsome but oddly bitter smile.

"jIH Hegh batlh, vaj reH Hegh law', not mob."

There was a moment of silence when the stage light deemed, casting Harry into shadow, then raucous cheers erupted from the audience.

Harry raised a fist once in acknowledgment of the cheers, then turned smartly and strode off the stage, the replica of the the Sword of Gryffindor resting comfortably on his shoulder.

"I notice that you didn't bring your little friend with you this time," Yush mused around the pipe in her mouth as she handed him yet another bottle of blood wine, though this one wouldn't be squirreled away in the back of the closet back at his dorm. Harry pulled the cork out with his teeth, and drew back a swig, Yush grunted approvingly.

"Not this night," He told Yush with unusual solemnness, "this night is the night for old memories. Very old memories, and so I will honour fallen comrades/friends/family/lovers, drink to their names then more drink until I forget their faces, shag to forget the present and my unending future. I will most likely wake up in a place I don't know, maybe I will cry, maybe I will bleed, for however briefly I am capable of, then I will put it away and never think about it again for another year."

Yush grunted, blowing a few lazy smoke rings, giving him a knowing look, "a man unable to die can't die with honor, and can't pass into the embrace of Stovokor...No amount of bloodwine will take that away, but I can at least help you with part of your plans," She shot him a toothy leer, "For
Harry leered back, and offered the bottle to Yush, who took a healthy swig. Harry didn't comment on how Yush had figured it out. It wasn't hard really. Yush was an unusually perceptive Klingon who at some point had a Betazoid in her near ancestry, giving her a bit of an empathic ability. Death, for whatever reason, while blocking him from telepathic intrusion, had not bothered to mask his emotions, it was really quite annoying. She had likely felt his spark of familiarity when they bumped into each other his first week into Starfleet while he had been out exploring. After that, combined with his unchanging looks, it wasn't hard to deduce that he wasn't aging. Especially given that she had known him in her primal youthful adulthood decades ago.

"You nearly broke me in two the first time we meant, Spock nearly had a conniption when he saw the mess we made of the ambassadorial suite, as I recall," Harry chuckled.

"Father was impressed though, I think he would have even approved of a marriage between our two houses, for all that you were just a human, based on your survival alone," Yush mused fondly.

Harry grimaced, "like either of us would have tolerated such an arrangement, "It was a relief to the both of us, for all the fun we had otherwise, when Spock got called away on a diplomatic emergency...though I often wonder if he did that for fear what my influence would do to the Klingon Empire."

Yush handed back the bottle, laughing uproariously, "I think he just wanted you for he and his mate's self," she chortled, then suddenly reached out and picked Harry up and tossed the drunken cadet over her burly shoulder. "You may not have made it to Stovokor yet, but I guarantee that you shall see its gates before the night is through."

With that, the old Klingon carried him off to her rooms to do exactly that.

Chapter End Notes

The Pach- Klingon for The "Claw."

Translation of Klingon Poem (might be wrong since I used a translation program):

Heart beat!
My passion is strong!
Blood boil!
It is a boil all the war!

I will be representing my line, and all alone
to the last breath
the enemy fell, then I.

I die with honor
Warrior in death I am never alone.

Graduation

Chapter Notes

Short chap.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Graduation Day...

Harry groaned when his eyes cracked open in the first rays of dawn, just refraining from manfully yelping when a pair of eager dark eyes stared down at him from an excited face.

"Wha...?" he slurred.

"Its graduation day!" Kim exclaimed excitedly, practically jumping up and down in his purple sleep shorts and sleeveless silk number.

Harry glowered and flipped his friend the bird before huddling back under the blankets.

He swore in perfusion, many of them the most virulent of Klingon cusses, an some that sounded suspiciously Vulcan sounding. Kim had not realized that Vulcan language was capable of something so...ardent, huh.

Kim proceeded to not wait like a sane person, and pulled Harry out of bed, dragging his protesting roommate into the bathroom and tossing him into the sonic shower.

Harry was dragged out 10 minutes later when Kim found him sleeping against the wall, and was unceremoniously, but correctly, shoved into his graduation cadet issue dress uniform. His every day gear in his Federation issue shoulder bag, a roll shoved into his mouth, and Potato tossed onto his shoulders who hissed indignant threats at Kim, snapping his fangs at the excitable Kim half halfheartedly, before grumbling in Harry's ear about crazy humans and settled her coils more comfortably around Harry's torso under his uniform and took a nap. (1)

3 hour later...

Harry Kim could now admit that perhaps he had been a smidgen over eager when he felt the sudden weight of a head flopping onto his shoulder, then a dampness of drool soaking into his pristine dress uniform as they sat in with their fellow graduates during the middle of the Dean of Starfleet Academy’s riveting speech, he reflected that maybe insisting on being an hour and a half early before the proceedings might have been a bit to much for Potter's sleep deprived status thanks to his steady schedule of a late-night philandering sleep cycle.

Circumspectly, because they were located in the row to in the front and slightly left of the podium where the man was droning on, it made things all the more potentially awkward for Harry, and in an effort to avoid his firend causing a seen by falling out of his chair, he circumspectly pinched Potter’s side.

“Oh you saucy vixen!” Potter slurred loudly, causing neighboring cadets to laugh and the Dean to pause in his speech, shooting a disproving look Kim’s way, though the disapproval was laced with
amusement.

Harry felt his ears turn bright red, especially when his roommate continued to loudly mumble "Come on Will! let me play your trombone...*snore*". Then Potter suddenly latched onto an earlobe and began to nibble on it. Harry's face reached new levels of rouge, and only his excellent grip on the lessons from his one semester of Vulcan meditation techniques kept him from jumping and yelping.

That didn't stop his neighbors on either side of him from quietly snickering at Harry's misfortune through out the rest of the speech as Harry tried valiantly to not attract any more attention while dis-tangling his friend from his slumbering lascivious embrace.

Potato meanwhile, who had slithered from under Potter's uniform and was currently coiled under his chair, gave a few snaky hisses of amusement, rather thinking that her human's nest-mate deserved it for disturbing his beauty sleep before slipping off back into a nap.

ooo ooo ooo

_I hour later, Reception..._

Harry felt his heart leap into his chest when Lyndsay came rushing towards where he was standing with Potter, who was looking more energized from his nap, the berk, and his parents, who were occupied with a rather entertaining story on Potter's part involving a couple of Vulcans and an encounter with the illogical food stuff known as sloppy joes, all paused at the exuberent girl's approch.

Though this attention was mainly because Lyndsey of course took that moment to trip and fall flat on her face at Kim’s feet, but she was still waving a PADD excitedly as she got to her feet.

“You wont believe this but guess what?! You and I got our assignments already! and guess who got their first choice!” she squealed excitedly.

Harry felt his heart nearly explode in excitement, nearly passing out from near disbelief as he shakily took the PADD from his friend after helping her up, and read the contents.

Thanks to his work as editor of the school newspaper his senior year, despite some controversial actions on his part, he had earned several interstellar awards, particularly in relation to his work on the paramilitary organization/terrorist group known as The Maquis. He knew that one of those awards was his choice of assignment from a selection of recently commissioned ships. When Harry had learned that Captain Janeway, whom he had secretly idealized, was going to be captaining one of these ships, he had applied to Voyager faster then you could say "Warp coil." Even then he had not thought that such an intelligent and well respected Captain as Katherine Janeway would want someone as fresh as him in Ops on her bridge.

He was also ecstatic that Lyndsay had applied to and gotten a posting on Voyager as well, though from what he understood, Voyager had been her second choice behind the Enterprise.

Harry smirked fondly when she pulled Potter into a twirl and dip, then took advantage of the maneuver to steal Potter's carefully arranged and chosen plate of finger foods, making the other squawk indignantly. Harry looked down at the PADD and noted the highlighted name and assignment of Lyndsey and Potter, glad that his friends would be joining him. His eyes trailed towards his female friend. While their tentative romance had never gone anywhere and had instead become more of a friendship over the years, with Harry eventually moving on from his crush to form a relationship with Libby, a beautiful brunette whom he had met at a Ktarian music festival,
the two were still relativity close.

He sighed, wishing that Libby was there with him to celebrate as well...that and other reasons. Harry's fingers briefly brushed against the discreet bulge in his pocket where the tiny velvet box rested. but she'd had to attend an improtant mandatroy conference and wasn't able to attend.

“Oh Harry! My darling boy!” his mother exclaimed as she read the PADD he'd past her, her chest puffed out in pride, “I knew that one day Starfleet would see how special you are and give you the posting! Congratulations!”

Harry's father made an approving noise as he to read the posting details, "This is a good start in your career, keep this up, and you'll reach that goal of yours to become the youngest made captain in Starfleet."

His father and mother pulled him into a tight hug, arms strong despite their old age.

Since Harry was busily being crushed by his proud parents, Potter took the deployment orders, perusing the results, and smirked, "Hey Kim, looks like we all got our dream position," He chuckled, waving the device under Harry's nose, "I'm to be one of the ship's Science officers, blue onesie here I come!"

Lyndsey gave a mock sniff, "Well while your shut up in a lab all day tinkering with biology samples, I'll be where the real action is, in engineering."

Potter smirked, "my dear Ms. Ballard, tinkering with biology is the better part of my day," he waggled his eyebrows lasciviously.

The two shared a good chuckle while Harry groaned and his parents rolled their eyes.

Chapter End Notes

(1) I am well aware of Potato's changing pronouns, I did that on purpose, as Potato's particular fictional species can willingly change its gender from one to the other or even both, when the mood strikes it.

Further, the events of Kim's time at the paper come from a reference to Star Trek Voyager Pathways book, and his meeting with his girlfriend was referenced in his wiki page.

Now Boarding, Destination: Adventure!

Chapter Notes

This is where the fic begins to align with events from the Star Trek Voyager canon. Though of course, this is a crossover, so it won't always go like the canon in later chaps.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

2371, Deep Space 9...

“Wow! I knew that Deep Space 9 had a reputation for commerce and interspecies travel because of the wormhole, but it's quite another thing to see in person!” Kim enthused.

Harry couldn't help the fond look that he shot his friend as the new Operations Officer for Voyager turned his head this way and that, eyes wide. It reminded him of another life, long ago, when a young boy stepped through a wall of moving bricks and into his own alien (figurative) place of commerce.

Potato, sensing his turn in mood, hissed at him concernedly. Harry just patted the slight lump under his blue and black uniform.

“Well, after two and a half standard weeks on board a Tellurite cargo ship, I am quite looking forward to stretching my legs and see what the station has to offer!” Harry declared briskly, rubbing his hands together and jiggling the plump pouch filled with gold pressed latinum. Harry had very much enjoyed the many games of Dom Chat back home over the years that it had taken for him to amass his small fortune.

Kim shot him a bland look, “It's not like you stayed cooped up in our quarters, I know damn well you space walked during that stop over at Dudlos 6.”

“Oh just because my constitution isn't so delicate to have my head stuck in the bathroom...” Harry sniffed.

Kim shot him an incredulous look, “Dyspnea is common side effect of being in the presence of Tellurites’ for a prolonged period...” he exclaimed, "it's perfectly natural!"

Harry just rolled his eyes, and after separating a bit of funds and slapping them into Kim’s hands, he said briskly, “go on then Mr. Sensitive Constitution, go have some fun, I’m going to go take advantage of the famous Quark Holosuites before we have to leave.”

Kim grumbled under his breath, but meandered towards the bar once they arrived at Quark’s. Harry noticed that his friend was near by several federation officers amongst the clientele, so he felt safe in leaving his friend for an hour or two.

Harry grabbed a nearby Ferengi, waved a bit of latinum under his bulbous nose, and soon has his program, though he was warned that they weren’t liable in case of injury and death, and that he would have to pay extra for the cleaning bill.

Harry rubbed his hands together, tossed a few more strips at the Ferengi and was soon led up to the
best of the holosuites, program clutched in his hands. if this program was as good as he hoped it was, he might just fork out an extra strip to keep it permanently to add to his...collection.

A few hour later Harry Potter stumbled out of the Holosuite, satisfied indeed, and tossing his newly acquired holochip happily as he meandered through the nearly empty corridors of Voyager. Certainly, it was busy in other sections of the ship, but most of the crew not needed were taking advantage of what leave they could before leaving for their mission.

Harry had to admit, he had not thought that the first person he would bump into on board the ship would be his new captain and an old friend.

"Oof!" the creaky old man grunted as the two of them collided into each other turning a blind corner.

Harry rubbed his nose, damn old guy had a really bony collar bone...then the old man exclaimed as a short woman with hair pulled into a bun on her head, uniform and pips indicating that this must be Captain Janeway, who was assisting the revered personage to his feet, "Good grief! It's you!"

Harry's face suddenly split into a smile and with cheerful abandon, pulled the crotchety old retired doctor into a hug, "Bones you crusty old curmudgeon! Merlin's Harry balls its been ages! You look...alive."

Dr. McCoy, or Bones, snorted "and you look the same stowaway that you did when I met you."

"Now, Now Bones," Harry chided, winking with a finger on his lips, "Don't go airing our glorious first meeting, let it be a surprise for the Captain...oh wait a moment," Harry paused and stood at attention, shooting of a salute, "Greetings Sir, I am Ensign Harry Potter, Science Officer and one of your new Xenobiologists, reporting for duty."

"At ease Ensign...though I think that won't be to hard for you," the Captain said drolly.

"You nailed the head on that one," Bones muttered to himself, then to Harry "I didn't believe that damn Hobgoblin in his last communication that you had actually decided to join Starfleet, did you finally tire of tormenting the Vulcans and catting with random Klingons?"

"Now, Now Bones," Harry chided with a grin, "You know I don't kiss and tell," Harry winked, "Though I wouldn't mind going down memory lane with an old friend over a bottle of...well," Harry coughed awkwardly, remembering that they had his superior officer in their presence, "The good ol' true blue."

Bones' eyes lit, "Really? what year?"

"Oh, I think its the '45?" Harry scratched his head.

Bones rubbed his knarled hands eagerly, "You may be a troublemaking tomcat, but you somehow always seem to have the good stuff."

"Then I shall leave you two to catch up with each other," the Captain finally said, "I shall come by to accompany you later back to the station Ambassador...and Ensign, while I suspect there is a fascinating story behind how you two know each other, that comradery better not extend to needing the Ambassador emergency beamed back to his quarters on board his ship because he couldn't walk, nor yourself unable to attend to your station, Is that clear?"
"Yes sir," Harry snapped straight smartly.

When the woman was gone, Harry settled Bones' arm in his, despite the man's protest about not needing any help, Harry's response was that he just wanted to be on the arm of a handsomest man on the ship.

"I'd believe that if it weren't for the fact that we both know that you don't care one whit what someone looks like," Bones grumped dryly, "just so long as their humanoid enough to have compatible equipment...then again, you might consider anything else a challenge..." his voice trailed off, but did go along with it anyway.

Harry just smiled.

ooo ooo ooo

Harry Kim let out a breath of relief when he spotted the familiar head of messy black hair a few people ahead of him in the line queuing up in front of the replicators in the Mess.

Kim ordered his egg salad sandwich and waved Potter over. Harry grimaced at his tray, a large sloppy looking veggie burger, his friend must be feeling nostalgic, he wondered what brought that on? Though he supposed that they were heading out on their first mission, that was bound to illicit some strong emotions.

"Hey Kimmy, how was your first day out of Drydock?" Potter chirped cheerfully.

"I told you to not call me that," Harry blushed, then he sniffed the air and wrinkled his nose, "You smell like...Is that Alcohol!? Potter! We're on duty!"

"Oh, relax your pretty head Kim, you know I'm a functioning alcoholic, Merlin how do you think I got through Quantum Mechanics?"

"You barely passed Quantum Mechanics!" Harry groaned, "and you threw up in the last guest speaker's shuttle!"

Potter waved his hand dismissively, "That LeForge was completely understanding..."

Kim shot Potter a sour look, "only because there was an outbreak of Andorran Mauve Fever on Campus and he totally bought your outright like you...you pickled fiend!"

Potter had the audacity to break out into peals of laughter, drawing a few looks and raised eyebrows. Harry sighed, why did he bother? he grabbed his giggling friend and dragged him over to the one table without anyone except a tall sandy haired man in the red uniform of bridge crew, eating Tomato soup with a glum look on his face. This man was Tom Paris, semi ex-con and guide through the badlands for their mission to extract an undercover officer in the Maquis, who had failed to check in.

Tom shot Harry a droll look full of expectation as the two men sat across from him.

"So, Harry, I'm sure by now the others have given you the sordid details of my background story."

Harry studied the man for a quiet and serious moment before he said soberly "...son of a prominent Starfleet admiral, dishonorably discharged from Starfleet and later joined the Maquis before being captured and serving time at the Federation Penal Settlement in New Zealand...did you really try to cover up your involvement in the deaths of those officers on Caldik Prime? ."
Tom shrugged, "yeah."

Harry studied the other man for a moment, then his eyes trailed to Potter who was eyeing Tom up for completely different reasons, like he was trying to remember something even as he dipped a piece of his Veggie burger in his cup of extra stiff ractajino.

What was it about him attracting friends of a questionable nature to his person?

He sighed internally but asked, "So why did you confess then? Was it because you...regretted what happened?"

Tom snorted, amused by the rather naive and very Starfleet question, before he answered glibly, "Yeah Harry, the ghosts of those three dead officers came to me in the middle of the night and taught me the true meaning of Christmas" he rolled his eyes, before getting up to leave, only to stop when he felt a restraining hand on his arm. (1)

Harry very seriously said, "Well, whatever your reasons, and whatever you've done aside, I don't let other's opinions tell me who can or cannot be my friend."

Tom stared at Harry for a moment, then the smallest of smiles quirked his lips, "ok then, if that’s how it is...lets go see the bridge, I'm tired o eating anyway," tom stared down at his tray with a lip curl, "4 different kinds in the replicator and they still can't get it right!"

The three men, Harry dragging Potter with them after introducing the two of them (Tom was vastly amused by the twin names) who still looked deep in thought, deposited their refuse in another replicator to dematerialize, and meandered out of the Mess and made their way towards the bridge, where the group would separate to take their stations, and Potter would return to his quarters to sleep off his entertaining the important ambassador. Potter wouldn't be starting his shift for another few shifts yet, not too much urgency for a reptilian Xenobiologist for this mission.

Before they did though, Potter suddenly exclaimed "Ah ha!" causing the other two men to jump in the Turbolift.

Potter pointed at Tom dramatically, "Your Owen's boy! the one that nearly drowned in Lake Tahoe!"

Tom grimaced, "So you know the Old man huh? and just so you know, I didn't almost drown, I bailed before the Shuttle sunk. So, let me guess, the esteemed Admiral Paris is a personal hero of yours? Where did you meet? at yet another mucky muck Starfleet brass convention?"

Harry suddenly choked as he realized exactly how Potter knew the admiral. Luckily for Harry, the turbolift opened onto the bustling bridge just as Potter, grinning madly, opened his mouth to explain. He hurriedly rushed Tom out, saying a hasty goodbye to a clearly amused Potter.

"What was that all about?" Tom asked, looking intrigued, and raised his eyebrows when Harry blushed bright red.

"Trust me Tom, you do not want to know, you...really don't want to know."

ooo ooo ooo

At some point when Harry Potter settled into the top bunk in their bedroom, falling into the bosom of slumber land, Voyager had pulled out of dock at DS9 and started their course to the Badlands. In fact, for most of the exciting happenings, Harry continued to snore happily.
Potato meanwhile had ventured for his own nap under Kim's pillow, body bulging with the recent meal of a whole turkey. The only disappointing thing was that it had not been alive before hand, coming from the replicator, but it would be a few months until the supply of rabbits Harry had brought aboard, currently sitting in a little pen in one of the labs, had bred enough to satisfy a more regular feeding schedule, though the chickens were coming along nicely, though no one was sure why the ensign had brought aboard so many, taking up half of a smaller unused cargo hold.

Still, Potato didn't mind, as she rather enjoyed the taste of turkey. Then, after some time had passed, not that a snake was overly aware of the human conception of it anyway, Potato was startled awake when the ship suddenly shook all around them. The snake only just managed to wrap himself around a bed post, hissing in alarm.

Unfortunately, Potato's glorious master and provider of fat rabbits and dead turkeys, was not blessed with Potatoes superior reflexes and glorious coils as the small human male was flung from his resting place with a startled grunt, tossed across the room where he smashed sickeningly into the wall. Potato recognized the tell-tale sound of crushed bones and the scent of death, while admittedly always pervaded her master, was much stronger.

Potato despaired, his beautiful master was dead! which was a real shame as there were so few, if any other two leggers that had the intelligence to speak like any sensible serpent.

Then suddenly, the body disappeared and his master was suddenly standing up. Oh...well, never mind then.

Apparently not for long as the careening out of control ship tossed him into another wall, there was another sickening crunch.

Poor Potato let out another melodramatic hiss of woe at the loss of his master so soon after getting him back.

Suddenly, looking quite aggravated, Potato's Master was on his feet again, trying to find a purchase.

This happened a few more times.


Eventually the ship finally stopped, Potato in a small space of time was now somewhat inured to the dramatic loss of her glorious master, and Harry popped back into existence without any Toss and Crunch to add to his Pop.

:Master?: the serpent questioned faintly, and gladly slithered up the offered naked arm until Potato was wrapped snuggly around Harry's bare neck, :What happened? I did not like it, and are you alive again for longer this time?:

"I guess that's one way of putting it," Harry grumbled, then put his fists on his bare hips and turned to an empty spot near a wall and began ranting, "What the hell?! Are you kidding me?! The very first mission!? Why didn't you warn me!? then Harry's face paled, "Merlin! Kim!"

Harry sprang from the room, grabbing a pair of casual grey jeans, replicated after his favorite piece of clothing from his 20th century days, he cussed, one pant leg on, as he soon forgot about his state of undress when he found the door controls unresponsive, and when he touched the metal, felt the distinctive heat of a likely raging inferno just outside.

Harry gritted his teeth, eyes swerving around the room until he spotted a small vent, revealed when
the bookcase had fallen over in the ruckus.

It was small, but not too small for his particularly sized skinny arse, so after grabbing a few tools from the still miraculously standing side table, Harry removed the vent cover, relieved when Potato confirmed that the air smelled relatively clear. Harry pulled up the rest of his pants, zipped his fly and proclaimed, "Don't worry Kim, I'm coming," and crawled inside.

ooo ooo ooo

Harry was crawling around the Jefferies tubes for over an hour, having gotten lost quickly in the maze-like inards of the ship. The only one who was pleased by the entire scenario was Potato, who was slithering just ahead of him, exclaiming how useful these tunnels would be for traveling and hunting around the ship.

Harry made a mental note to warn the Engineering staff ahead of time, so some poor sod didn't get the life scared out of them and kill his familiar with a sonic screwdriver or something.

Of course, just as he found an access hatch which lead presumably somewhere around the third or fourth deck that he was whisked away in a flash of pulsating light.

Harry blinked when he found himself crouching on all fours in the middle of an open field in front of a cozy looking farm that reminded him vaguely of a more structurally sound Burrow. Of Course, just to make it that much more awkward, The Captain literally stumbled on him, sending the two rolling out of the corn, to land in an undignified heap at the feet of the rest of the bedraggled and confused crewmen.

The two managed to detangle themselves, an Engineer helped the captain to her feet while Harry was offered a hand up by a Yeomen.

"Sorry sir," Harry apologized, "I didn't expect to end up in a cornfield."

"I think its safe to say that's a widely shared sentiment ensign," Janeway gave Harry a disproving frown, "just what were you doing before you were taken with the rest of us? Your out of uniform and half way out of cloths Ensign."

"I got lost in the tubes, and my uniform is currently buried with the rest of my stuff under a pile of other stuff," Harry scratched the back of his neck.

Then out of the gathered crowd, whom the captain had turned to address after that brief inappropriately attired distraction, Kim stumbled out, looking rumpled, but otherwise undamaged. Harry went over and pulled Kim, with out a word, into a crushing hug.

Kim knew it wasn't exactly appropriate, but he had learned over the years that his roommate was a tactile being, particularly with those he cared about, especially if he had been distressed in someway. Harry may know it was useless to struggle in these situations of course, but he also allowed it because maybe he had been worried about his friend to and was relieved to see him whole if embarrassed at his current attire.

They eventually did separate, Harry taking an extra tricorder from another officer, and soon the quick succession of facts that the crew was spread out on some sort of Holodeck inside a giant Space Array that was explained to Harry brought them 70,000 light years from the Alpha Quadrant using a Displacement Wave. Then after everyone was caught up on their current situation, a kindly grandmotherly sort of woman bustled from the farmhouse offering lemonade, greetings, but nothing much else. The were soon joined by the holographic neighbours, and the crew was
dragged into a hoe down.

The core group around the captain eventually separated, while Harry and a few headed South to scan for any sort of possible way to breach the alien holodeck, and Kim and Tom leaving to scan for traces of a power source.

Harry and his group did find a few more stragglers, one of which was a rather green looking Lieutenant who had accidentally ended up a tree when he had been brought over, and the poor fellow was rather uneasy around heights. By the time Harry and the others managed to get the man down, the program around them began to disintegrate and they were all swept up into a purple light this time.

ooo ooo ooo

When Harry Potter came to, he was in some sort of long hallway filled with medical beds and he was naked but for some sort of thick black mesh cloth. The rest of the beds were unoccupied and there were two faces looking down at him. One was an old man with a banjo thrown over a shoulder, the other was of course, Death.

"My things have certainly been amusing since you were napping, though I must say its been awhile since I had the pleasure of retrieving the soul of one of his sort, I'm looking forward to the stimulating conversations one we are behind the veil.

This of course was not seen by the old man who, apparently, while just a hologram, represented an entity that was apparently close to dyeing, that and when death was amused, that meant that a lot of potential disasters had happened.

Harry's hand shot out and gripped the worn plaid collar of the old man's shirt, dragging the startled figure closer as he pulled himself upward. He winced at the pain in his belly, what the hell had happened to him?!

"Where in the hell is my crewmates? What the hell do you want you...you creaky avatar of protons?!!"

"It had to be done you see," the old man muttered, "I am running out of time...I thought maybe at least two of them...maybe, but no, it was failure...I had hoped to repay my debt before..."

The senseless muttering tapered off and the man pulled himself from Harry's grasp as he began to pace, "I kept you because your body is somehow different from the others, stopped in time you see, I have not come across another like you, and even if the genetic modifications wouldn't hold, I had hoped to keep you on stand by just in case, but I have grown to weak to train you to take over, and now with the station under attack, I can't risk the technology falling into the wrong hands, your captain was also rather insistent that you be returned. I agree of course, I'm not a bad being, just..." the ramble trailed off.

"A dying one," Harry finished with a sigh, at the being's look he grunted, "I can literally see Death at your shoulder, its looking forward to a good long chat with you in the afterlife. The git was always fond of long lived beings."

The old man, who introduced himself as the Caretaker, grimaced, confused. Harry waved it away, "never mind, just tell me where the crew is"

His answer was to be transported back into the Jefferies tubes where he had originally been taken, though at least he had his pants back. Harry cussed at the cramped space and hastily made his way
towards to the hatch. Merlin, he was tired! the first damn peaceful time he had he was taking a nap!

ooo ooo ooo

By the time that Harry had made it out of the ship's bowls, the array had been destroyed and some attacking marauding locals called the Kazan had slunk away under the threat of Voyager's superior technology and Captain Janeway's willingness to use it.

Harry, because moments like this are apparently what he existed for apparently, had found himself falling out of a loosened vent after tumbling down an unexpected drop somewhere, and landed with a pained groan directly on the bridge.

"Ensign Potter," Captain Janeway said with a sigh, equal parts annoyed and relieved (she had worried that her lone officer stuck over there had not been returned and met with a fiery doom), "glad to see you in one piece, now get off my command chair and off my bridge and into uniform...after reporting to medical."

"Yes sir," Harry groaned with a cough, and limped off the bridge with a pained grimace.

The one drawback about the conditions of his immortality was that it only worked when he snuffed it. Any injury or germ that he got before hand however...yeah. He suffered like anyone else. it was times like this that he was glad he had time travelled all those decades ago. The medicine was certainly better...not that he enjoyed medical bays anymore then he had enjoyed any form of hospital in either dimension.

Harry was too busy nursing his bruised ribs and pride to see the recent additions on the Bridge in the way of the Maquis, nor the return of a familiar face.

When Harry got to Medical, not even the snarky balding holographic doctor could hold him back when he found Kim sitting up, covered in a thermal blanket on a biobed next to a Klingon woman he had never met before. Both looked worse for ware, both had odd patches of discoloured raised bumps here and there, particularly on their hands.

"Kimmy!" Harry exclaimed dramatically, flinging himself onto the other ensign, who wore an expression or resigned ire as he was pulled into a crushing hug. But despite his annoyed, "stop calling me that!" just like on the array, the hug lingered. Harry was surprised when he pulled back and found his friend's eyes suspiciously shiny.

Harry's face softened. A few officers on the way down had given him a bit of a recap on what he had missed (good grief he had been unconscious for days! and he could kill that dotty old Caretaker for kidnapping and making Kim sick!) the fact that the ship was indeed trapped 70, 00 light years from home as the Array, their only way back, was destroyed, and the Maquis were being integrated in with the crew, which should lead to some interesting times. But the fact that everyone on the ship was now stuck a life time away from those they cared about...

Harry climbed onto the biobed with Kim, ignoring the Doctor's exclamation, "This is medical bay not a slumber party!" and pulled Kim tight against him.

For Harry, while he did have friends back home, had long come to understand in his old age, that such things were transient. Certainly, he missed those he cared about when they were gone, but he had experienced it so often now, that he had started to become used to the sting. For Kim though, who'd never really experienced a major loss like Harry had so many times before, suddenly realizing that he may not see his family, friends, hell his fiancé ever again! the potency of that
The Klingon women in the biobed beside them looked the other way as Kim buried his face into the crook of Harry's shoulder, and Harry didn't complain about the pain in his ribs or how damp his skin became, or the sting of that dampness on his abrasions. He just held his friend, because right in that moment they were all they had to cling to.

Sometime after they had reported to their duty stations, Ensign Harry Potter listened over the com as Janeway's voice full of surity and fire filled the ship.

"We're alone in an uncharted part of the galaxy. We've already made some friends here, and some enemies. We have no idea of the dangers we're going to face. But one thing is clear: both crews are going to have to work together if we're to survive. That's why Commander Chakotay and I have agreed that this should be one crew. A Starfleet crew. And as the only Starfleet vessel assigned to the Delta Quadrant, we'll continue to follow our directive to seek out new worlds and explore space. But our primary goal is clear. Even at maximum speeds, it would take 75 years to reach the Federation. But I'm not willing to settle for that. There's another entity like the Caretaker out there somewhere who has the ability to get us there a lot faster. We'll be looking for her. And we'll be looking for wormholes, spatial rifts, or new technologies to help us. Somewhere along this journey, we'll find a way back." (1)

Harry had no doubt, this seemed like the kind of ship and the kind of crew that might just do that, but Harry suspected that it would be a very long, very perilous, and very interesting while.

Chapter End Notes

(1) quoted lines from VOY season 1 ep 1.

Recommendation: "Family Guy Parody of Harry Potter - "Stewie Potter" Episode 1" created by patrick McCarthy on Youtube.
Commander Chakotay, the recent ex-captain of a Maquis ship and now field commissioned into the first officer of a Starfleet vessel of all things, stared down warily at the large hissing serpent that was currently wrapped around the base of the captain's chair.

Chakotay was currently in command while Captain Janeway was taking a break finally from all her planning and bickering over the exhaustive list of things needing to be done yet for the ship and her crew. Chakotay had to work hard, with combined orders from the Doctor and Tuvok to get the woman to finally take a break.

All that effort, and of course the unexpected had to happen before he could even take a seat in the command seat.

Tuvok stood up from his crouch, brushed his knees off once, and nodded "You were right to be wary Commander, that is indeed a very poisonous animal, one of the most venomous serpents that Vulcan has to offer, though how it got aboard the ship...it is difficult to say, most likely it might have gotten trapped in some cargo and got loose on the ship when our ship was taken by the Caretaker."

Then Ensign Harry Kim arrived, right on the mark for his own shift in Operations. Curious about the gathering of officers with their phasers out around the command chair, he walked over to Tom Paris and Chakotay could hear him whisper.

"Hey Tom, why are some of the bridge crew pulling out their phasers on the empty command chair?"

"It's not empty," Tom whispered back looking amused, "apparently one of our valiant leaders has the sensible fear of being bitten by an exotic poisonous snake."

"A snake!" the Ensign exclaimed, then quickly made his way over to the nervous officers (apparently they had the same sensible fear as well) and waved his hands, pushing through the gathering until he was standing between the bridge crew and the snake.

"Wait! Don't kill it!"

"Ensign!" Chakotay exclaimed, various hands tightened reflexively on phasers at the alarm in his voice.

Tuvok, the more calmly toned Vulcan that he was, said "Ensign Kim, it is highly unorthodox to stand so close, and within firing range of a dangerous animal who would not care either way for your heroics. Please move, very slowly, away from the dangerous animal."

Then Chakotay tensed, as everyone else did, when the serpent began to slither out from under the chair and wrapped its self around Kim's leg.
"Ensign...what ever you do, don't move..." Chakotay breathed. Everyone watched, hearts in their throats (or weariness in the case of Tuvok) as the serpent moved ever so higher up the young officer's leg, then his torso.

"Hold still ensign," Tuvok commanded, "I will set my phaser on stun, it should be enough at this range to neutralize the threat and not cost you permanent damage."

Far from looking alarmed or even nervous however, the younger man's body language told Chakotay that he was not feeling threatened at all, in fact, he seemed rather...annoyed?

To a few hastily muttered curses, Kim reached down and casually grabbed the serpent, unwrapping it from around his torso and instead calmly draping it over his shoulders, settling the weight evenly along his neck and arms like he was wearing a particularly long scarf instead of something that could kill an average human within a heartbeat.

The ensign gave a very put upon sigh and tapped his combadge.

"Ensign Kim to Ensign Potter."

A brief minute then.

"Ensign Potter here, what's up Ensign Kim, last I saw you were heading on your way to the bridge...get lost?"

Chakotay might have been amused at the byplay between what had to be two obviously close friends..., now that he thought about it, Ensign Potter was that xenobiologist that had been kept by the Caretaker and had eventually reappeared on the bridge after falling out of an access panel. Ah yes, kind of hard to forget something like that.

"Say Ensign Potter, you wouldn't by chance happen to be missing something would you?" Ensign Kim drawled.

A pause then...

"No... nothing that I can...oh! well, there was that vintage *Saucy Betazoid Man's Men of 2245* poster that I seem to have misplaced. Oh! did you find it?! You know how I love to gaze at January's perfect pecs at the end of a long day in the lab..."

Despite the tense situation, a few officers in the background couldn't help the odd involuntary giggle when Kim exclaimed, face bright red and looking suitably horrified, "Potter! I'm on the bridge!"

"Oh...well, I guess if that...what's his name? Commander Chickadee? Chokey?"

The Ensign palmed his face and said "Commander Chakotay," he corrected, carefully not looking at said Commander who wore both an annoyed and amused expression on his face.

"Yeah, Commander Jacket-Tay, yeah he can borrow, but its limited edition so not for keeps."

"This isn't about that damn calendar!" Kim snapped, "Potato attempted to take command of the ship!"

"Oooh!", then more sheepishly, "Sorry about that, Is Potato safe?"

"Potato?" Tom mouthed to a slightly pained looking nearby security officer.
"I'll bring him by after my shift," Ensign Kim sighed.

"Alright then, Ensign Potter out."

"Ensign Kim," Chakotay said severely, "Can I see you in the Captain's office?"

"Yes sir," Ensign Kim said glumly as he gently picked up the serpent and wrapped hr around his neck.

Chakotay internally sighed, it had started out such a nice day for once. He had just left B'ellana to her first day in command in Engineering, and had hoped to at least have a moment to breath before the next crisis, but it seemed not, damn.

ooo ooo ooo

Neelix was staring at a chicken.

Said chicken was clucking in a rather threatening manner from where it hung in Neelix's grasp. Of course the aggrieved poultry had every right to be annoyed, particularly as Neelix yet again shook the ball of pale feathers vigorously. The bird let out a particularly loud squawk as Neelix attempted to then squeeze the bird like a Kaizon with the last drop of water in his water bottle.

Neelix let out a yelp of pain as the chicken managed to, successfully this time, land a series of damaging pecks to his hand, causing the Tilaxeon to drop the bird reflexively and clutch his offended appendage.

It was in that moment that Kes walked into the kitchen that Neelix had recently set up in the Mess, stepping aside in reflex when the bird, spotting the open door made a dash for freedom, clucking an epic speech of "he may take my eggs but not our waddles!" or some such feathered proclamation that would never be understood by anyone.

"Neelix!" Kes exclaimed, rushing over to the aggrieved man, "your hand is bleeding! are you alright? what happened?"

"It's nothing dearest," Neelix sighed, reaching into a nearby drawer and pulling out a dermal regenerator and began running the rejuvenating light over the wound. "It seems cooking with human food was harder then I had anticipated. I had planned to make scrambled eggs for the captain, but no matter what I did, I could not get the eggs out of that forsaken fowl."

"Neelix, that is an alien creature, it could have been dangerous!" Kes scolded, putting her hands on her hips, "for all you knew it could have been poisonous! why didn't you ask one of the crew how to handle the creature or do it for you? Doesn't it belong to one of the science officers?" Kes frowned, trying to remember the name.

Neelix shifted uncomfortably, "Well, actually it belongs to Ensign Potter, I got it from the cargo bay that has been outfitted to hold live specimens until your Hydroponics bay is done, Ensign Potter was agreeable to me taking a few eggs since they weren't fertilized."

"Well, why didn't you ask him for help then?" Kes asked, exasperated.

"Well, you see..." Neelix shifted awkwardly, "I think...well, I didn't want to make it anymore awkward..."

Kes gave him a confused look and Neelix leaned forward, "now don't be upset dearest but...I think Ensign Potter...is attracted to me."
"Why do you think that?" Kes asked curiously.

"Well..." Neelix blushed purple, "As I was leaving, I turned to ask him something and I caught him...looking at me."

"Looking at you?"

"Well, looking at my...buttocks."

Kes suddenly laughed, "and you thought that I would be jealous?"

"Well, I am a very attractive," Neelix said, a little miffed by the laugh.

"Well, I am a little," Kes replied honestly once her humour died, "but given how you are when I am around Tom, you have to admit there is some humour to the whole thing, and besides," she pulled Neelix to her with a firm hand, "It just goes to show that Ensign Potter recognizes quality when he see's it, and as long as he looks but doesn't touch, he can look all he wants and envy me."

ooo ooo ooo

Cpt. Janeway was just settling in to her third cup of black coffee, sighing over the numerous reports that needed to be addressed. Even stuck in the Delta quadrant she couldn't escape PADDwork. She looked up with the alert on her door to the captain's waiting room chirped cheerfully.

"Come in," Janeway called out, signalling to the door that the visitor could enter, eager for a distraction.

Janeway raised an amused eyebrow when she spotted Ensign Potter. The man looked a little nervous, though given the circumstances for their previous encounters, she couldn't exactly blame him. 'Then again,' Janeway thought wryly, 'its not every Ensign that can so quickly leave enough of an impression to likely never be forgotten.'

"At ease ensign," Janway drawled, "unless you somehow expect to lose your shirt again, there's no need to be nervous."

"Erm..." Ensign Potter coughed awkwardly, "its actually partly why I needed to talk to you, Commander Chakotay and...Commander Tuvok."

The slight hesitation on the head of security's name did not go unnoticed by Janeway, filing it away for later. Sure enough, another chirp at her door, and at her call, she found a confused looking Chakotay, and the usually stoic Tuvok, who upon spotting the ensign seemed to somehow go even more rigid. It wasn't overly noticeable, but Tuvok had been a dear friend for years and she had come to recognize the subtle Vulcan ques over the years. In any case, something about the Ensign bothered her friend, and she yet again made a mental note to have a private chat with him later.

When everyone was seated, Janeway raised an eyebrow and said, "Well Ensign? what is so important that you felt you had to speak to three of your commanding officers?"

"Well, I wanted to be sure you see, and then I got caught up in helping to get the ship in order that I kind of forgot, but this morning I looked in the mirror as I was brushing my teeth and realized that I hadn't mentioned it yet, so..." the ensign's voice trailed off and he cleared his throat, apparently getting to the heart of the issue at a look from Janeway, "the reason I called you all here is that at some point in the future, you three and a group of people I can't name, are going to see me naked."

There was a pregnant silence, then.
"What?" Chakotay sounded understandably confused, and Janeway was amused to note a slight blush under his tattoos.

A sigh from the Ensign, "Look, a long time ago, I got caught up in a few time traveling shenanigans and during one of those instances, my past self meets you three for the first time in the near future sirs," he rubbed his forehead. "I can't go into anymore detail, that whole Temporal Prime directive and all."

Janeway raised a hand to forestall his explanation, "While I am sure there is a fascinating story behind this, and maybe even someday you could even share it with me, if we ever catch up, temporarilry speaking, but we are all aware about the dangers of altering the timeline...though I admit this is one of the more unusual moments I have ever heard about."

"Well, there is one thing that I need to ask you to do captain, and I can promise you that afterwards, when I am gone, it will be safe to assuage that curiosity."

"What is it that you need me to do?"

"The cause for why past me is on board will be made clear as soon as it happens, when it does after I leave I need you to tell the one behind it all to speak to me after the past me is gone," a pause then, "and make sure that Ensign Harry Kim is kept far away from me and occupied with something else."

Well that was all very vague and cryptic. The ensign did promise to tell her everything when his past self was gone, so she supposed it wont eventually be confusing and not at all unhelpful.

"I'm sorry that I couldn't warn you captain, about ending up 70,000 thousand light years from home. My past self was never sure how or when it happened. Though honestly I didn't think it would happen right out of the gate so to speak."

Janeway held up a hand, forestalling the ensign's excusing, "There is no need to apologize Ensign. The Temporal Prime directive is clear in these situations, its best not to try to explain further. You did what you had to do."

Eventually he was dismissed and Tuvok, who had remained quiet through it all, left soon after.

"What do you make of all that?" Chakatoay asked her when the two other men left.

"A future headache," Janeway sighed, "For all that I enjoy science, the intricacies of the time travel have been one of the few exceptions to that."

"How should we handle this then?"

"We do nothing other then what the ensign requested of us. We treat him as normally as if he were any other officer, for now."
Harry was helping Ensign Parsons in Neelix's recently appropriated gally in the Mess hall, when Death, who had been laughing uproariously at him as he tried to avoid getting burnt alive, suddenly stopped and disappeared from his view.

Harry didn't think much of it. Death would come and go at random all the time, however when Harry went to the Sickbay sometime after the lunch rush to have a severe grease burn seen to, the first thing he found was a frantic group of people surrounding a biobed and Death hovering interestedly nearby.

He found the captain talking quietly with Kim, a tearful Kes standing over what appeared to be Neelix, judging by what he could see of the lower half with a grim Doctor working furiously nearby while Commander Chakotay looked on stoically, laying a comforting hand on Kes' shoulder.

The barest cursory glance was tossed Harry's way as he quietly grabbed a nearby dermal regenerator from storage and set about treating his injury. As he did, he overheard the discussion and raised his eyebrows when he learned that Neelix had run afoul of some mysterious life-form that had stolen the man's lungs using some sort of transporter technology.

Harry raised a brow at that, muttering a "fascinating" under his breath.

When he was on his last sweep with the dermal regenerator, Death appeared at his side. "Had fun?" Harry muttered under his breath in aside to the entity out of ear shot.

"Oh yes," death purred, "It never ceases to amaze me, the the ingenuity that mortals have when trying to stay my hand a few extra minutes."

Harry rolled his eyes. He knew Death's fascination with Medical Sciences. Death had pestered Harry for decades to study medicine. harry had eventually succumbed somewhere in 2300, annoyed by Death's constant nagging, and had attended the Vulcan Academy of Science, specializing in Experimental medicine, before he dropped out when he got close to his 15-year mark and had to leave Vulcan, mysteriously disappear for a few years, then return as his own son, cousin, brother whom Ambassador Spock would take on as his ward out of respect for his previous one.

If Vulcans were inclined to superstitious behavior, they would have considered his family line cursed to misfortune. At most, the few that had noticed the recurrence, had speculated that it was pre-learned behavior.

Only a handful of people had been aware of his true nature: Spock, Saavick, Sarek, Kirk, Bones, Amanda, and Perrin. Out of those group, only Spock, Saavick, Bones and Perrin were still alive. Bones had been rather amused by his brief stint in medicine, particularly as he was both A) bad at
it, and B) that Death took such bloody enjoyment out of it, Bones and Spock being the only two who knew the full secret behind his immortality.

Since he was technically another generation of himself, his files didn't show that he had medical training outside of the biology of reptilian species, so he wasn't surprised that he hadn't been tapped over Paris or some of the others to help the Doctor.

"So what newfangled device did they whip up to secure Neelix from dying that has you tickled?" Harry asked, since Death was practically skipping to tell him.

"Get this," Death leaned close to Harry's ear, the appendage growing cold and numb, "that marvelous holographic being has created a set of holographic lungs in replacement."

Harry leaned his head back, rubbing his afflicted ear irritably, grabbing a hypo spray and the dermal regenerator again, grumbling under his breath as he set about treating it.

Though he had to admit, he was impressed. Holographic lungs! Granted it wasn't perfect, Neelix would likely be incapable of moving until they figured out how to find at least one real one, it was really quite brilliant.

Harry shot the Doctor an impressed look around death.

"See! I knew you would be impressed!" Death enthused, then more slyly, "makes you want to dust off that antique Stethoscope that Bones gave you doesn't it?"

Harry whipped his head back to glower at Death, "no."

"Oh come on," Death wheedled, "think of how much fun...I mean, think of how helpful you will be to those whom you are stuck with for the long, long foreseeable future," Death paused then added, "people that, besides your few exceptions, you can't just meet, greet and toss aside so quickly. What did the captain say? 70 or so years to get back to the Alpha Quadrant? and before you claim that you could just leave the ship for the Alpha Quadrant after attending to your little business with Q, do you think you can convince little Kim to come with you? so attached to the boy as you are. And of course, there is Tuvok..."

Harry grit his teeth, and simmered in impotent rage for a time, a hypo shaking in his hand to restrain from trying to strangle Death. Both pointless, and because he didn't want to make his nearby shipmates think he had suddenly lost his mind, attacking thin air. That, and Death would be even more tickled by his situation.

Eventually, Harry's incensed anger subsided, and his shoulders fell in defeat as he grumpily acknowledged that it had a point.

Harry set aside the hypo when he was done, and went over to the gathering.

"Excuse me Doctor," Harry interrupted the quiet conversation, causing the others to look in his direction, "I would like to offer my services. I am a xenobiologist, and while I specialize mostly in reptiles, snakes that is, I do have some medical knowledge."

The Doctor frowned severely, and Harry gathered in the slight pause that he was accessing his personnel file.

"Your file does not show any sort medical training beyond basic field triage."

Harry scratched his nose grumpily, he hated having to come up with previous "lives" knowledge on
"I learned it independently for a few years from an old friend of the family, I dare say I am better equipped to assist you then Tom," he gestured a thumb at the sandy haired man, "oh, no offense Tom."

"None taken," Paris said, looking distinctly relieved at the idea that someone more qualified than him was going to either be directly or indirectly involved in healing.

"Who was your teacher? a Ferengi licensing program?" the doctor scoffed. Not that he could blame the photonic being, Starfleet medical was notorious for being rather elitist, only looking seriously on those who are formally trained.

Harry didn't think revealing a certain name to the Doctor would harm anything, after all, Death was right, they were 70 years from home after all.

"One of my guardians actually," Harry said primly, "you should recognize him, password to that file is Mandrake Root."

It only took the Doctor a second, and he saw the man's mouth drop slightly before he gathered himself, and he said crisply, "Well, that's fine then. Mr. Paris, you can go," but before the man's relief could completely set in then chimed, "but I still expect you here for continual training."

Tom sighed in resignation, and nodded before leaving.

When the Doctor shoo'ed away everyone leave, with the captain shooting Harry a sharp, "we will talk about this later," and Kes had returned to Neelix's side, gently stroking his forehead in comfort, though occasionally shooting Harry a curious and thoughtful look, The Doctor and Harry retreated to his office.

“So I take it artificial lungs are out of the question of coarse or else he would be sporting a set right now and torturing ensign Parsons with cooking lessons,” Harry hummed, picking up the PADD and reviewing Neelix’s medical chart.

“His respitory system is linked to multiple points along his spinal column,” The Doctor sighed.

Harry grimaced, and with Neelix the only Tilaxian on board, that left donor organs a scarce option as well, and with their Dylethium stores dangerously low, cloning the organs was out of the question, even with the time gained from the holographic organs.

"Well, aren't we in a pickle," Harry declared after a pregnant pause thoughtfully.

"Wow, this is really good!" the woman said in surprise.

Harry grinned, "yeah, Kim got me hooked my first month into the Academy, never thought Straight-lace Kim would be into something that requires to be buried in a five-foot-deep whole wrapped in a cloth soaked in the highest concentration of Andorian Brandy. Of course, the replicator doesn't do it justice. I actually had one of my own buried under the apple tree in Kim's parent’s backyard that the two of us made," he smiled in fond sadness, "It’s a shame that we won’t be there to enjoy it with Kim's parents," he sighed, Kim had mentioned that only this morning
before they went on shift, they had been a little late after that sad declaration as Harry sat with Kim on the couch and held him.

He looked over at Kes, who looked down at her cake, fiddling with the fork before taking another bite. It occurred to him that she was such a finite being, only living for about a decade, and already she had chosen to leave her own home and head out into the unknown, the only thing that she had that was familiar to her in this great adventure of hers was Neelix.

"How did you two meet anyway?" Harry asked curiously, gesturing with a thumb at the Isotopic Restraints.

Kes smiled fondly, "Neelix had been trading with the Kazon on the surface for a few weeks, then one day during a successful water trade, he got drunk on Kazon grog and wandered off. He fell down a gully and knocked himself out. I found him during one of my visits to the surface and took care of him. We fell in love during that period, and when I was taken captive by the Kazon, he vowed to save me, and he did." she smiled.

Harry chuckled, "not to dissimilar from myself and my first love," Harry mused, "though I saved her from a murderer and a great deadly snake at the time."

Kes' eyes widened at that, "Really?!"

"Oh yeah, we were just kids though," Harry sighed, wondering why he was even telling this story, but figured, why not? "It was at a private school I attended long before I ended up staying with the Vulcans. A man, for political reasons, had...opened the door for a madman to sneak in unnoticed. He petrified some students, kidnapped Ginny, and well, through circumstances, left me in the lurch to be the one to save the day."

"That's...That's awful!" Kes gasped, loud enough that apparently Neelix heard as he called out, "What's awful?!"

The panic in his tone showed that he was mistaking it for himself, so Kes rushed over and reassured him, and with a look to Harry he shrugged and gestured that it was alright to share if she wanted to.

When she was done, Harry was bending over Neelix, applying a Hypo of Psytoplastic Stimulator to help along the lungs in filtering toxins from his system.

"Goodness Mr. Potter! That's quite an enthralling adventure!" He exclaimed, "Was it that incident that got you into your interest in studying reptiles?"

Harry hummed as he tapped out the current tox levels in Neelix's chart, "it might have, though its more that i have something of an affinity for snakes more than anything."

"Yes, I met your legume entitled pet in the cargo bay it is an impressive animal."

"Thanks," Harry said cheerfully, "though I wouldn't recommend calling them that within hearing, they are rather astute at deciphering when it is being called Pet. Potato prefers Companion, or Extreme Excellency."

"I shall remember to do that," Neelix said with a faint smile.

ooo ooo ooo

It was just Harry and Neelix alone in the Sickbay for once.
The Doctor had retreated to his office, and Harry had gently encouraged Kes to leave with Tom when the man's training shift was over so that she could take the time to clean up and rest in a comfortable bed. She had argued but Neelix had also insisted and she eventually acquiesced.

When the two blonds were gone, Neelix began to grumble, "He's like a Targalian vulture."

"Who's like a vulture?" Harry asked as he took Kes' vacated seat and pulled out his personal PADD which contained his notes on a new Rigalian serpent husbandry DNA sequence he had been working on. He had promised Kes Neelix wouldn't be left alone, it was one of the concessions to her taking a break.

"That Tom Paris," he grumbled, "one little accident, I lose a pair of lungs and he swoops in on Kes. He's just one big hormone walking around the ship."

Harry lifted a brow, "My, aren't you the jealous one?" he stated bluntly.

"I'm not jealous," Neelix denied.

"Oh, your jealous alright, trust me, I've been around long enough to know, and its not very flattering you know."

"I don't know what you're talking about," he huffed.

Harry lowered his padd with an internal sigh. No matter how old he was there were somethings that he couldn't escape, such as purposeful obtuseness. As if reading his thought, and most likely they were, Death who was lurking in a nearby corner, snorted in amusement and sing-songed "Potter calling the kettle black!"

Harry flipped Death off out of sight of the prone man and clarified, "It's not flattering to Kes. I mean, she may be new to a lot of things, but she knows herself, her love for you and her own mind. She's not afraid to speak up and put her foot down. Hell, she even told me in no uncertain terms that your fine backside was hers not to long ago."

Neelix blushed deeply, "she actually told you that?"

Harry laughed, "yeah, she was very upfront about her look but don't touch policy with me, which went the same for her as well of course."

"What?!" Neelix barked in outrage.

"Neelix," Harry sighed, "Kes is an amazing woman, and attractive to boot, of course she's going to turn heads, hell I caught the captain checking her out once."

Neelix spluttered at that.

"Tom is the same, but he respects her and your relationship, and even if he went so far as to make a move, Kes would turn him down flat, because she loves and respects your relationship to, and respects you to do the same if another person were to approach you similarly."

There was silence for a blissful moment as Neelix digested on Harry's words.

He sighed, "your right. I do respect her. Its just so hard to believe that she would choose to spend the rest of her life with someone like me, especially when I'm like this."

"Don't worry," Harry said, eyeing Death in the corner who remained at a polite distance that the
holographic lungs were providing, "I'm sure that the captain will hunt down those aliens that stole your lungs and when your better, we can all celebrate," Harry grinned and licked his lips dramatically, leaning close to Neelix, "Besides if anyone on this ship is one big hormone, that title belongs to me," he laughed as he added, "Maybe you two wouldn't be adverse to a threesome when your...up to it?"

Neelix spluttered, face a dark orange, and the Doctor stuck his head out snapping at Harry, "Please refrain from asphyxiating my patient with embarrassment."

Fortunately for everyone, including the Doctor's nerves, Captain Janeway did manage to finally locate and capture the aliens who stole Neelix's lungs.

After an interrogation and a very harsh threat, the captain eventually brought the two aliens, a paired couple of Veridians to sickbay to have a look at Neelix and see what they could do for him in gratitude for Janeway not killing them.

Upon first encounter, Harry, who was standing near the Doctor while they examined Neelix, thought that they all looked like some unfortunate attempt at building humanoid shaped statues out of pieces of ripped magazine pages (something he'd done with a few activists in 1969 when he was drawn into the first march after the Stonewall riots).

"The holographic lungs are primitive but seem to have done the job," the taller of the two Viridian, whose names he hadn't bothered to remember mused, "I'm surprised he is still alive."

The Doctor said something dry as the alien then went about, cautiously, using his high-tech harvester/scanner to run over the various security and rest of crew. It was at this time, as the scanner was nearing his direction, that Death, who had faded through a wall at some point, bored, returned in a sudden dramatic swoop, landing behind Harry and waving his scythe, just as the device pointed in his direction.

To Harry's surprise, the two aliens suddenly paled when they looked at him, or slightly to the side, and began to shiver. The machine didn't do anything odd and gave the same happy chirp it gave for everyone but the doctor.

"Er, yes..." the taller one swallowed, backing away from Harry slightly nudging his partner back with him and scurrying to the other side of the biobed, "let's...um, yes. There is plenty of pros..." he swallowed, and Harry swore he almost saw the man's breath fog as death leaned in the alien's direction, "pro..prospective d...donors!" he ended on a slightly higher pitch.

"Are you alright?" Janeway asked in concern, though Harry suspected she was worried that their...guests, would snuff it before they could heal her crewman. The Doctor and Harry whipped out their tricorders, ready to jump into action.

"We...are fine. It's just...a sudden feeling that many feel, particularly on our home world sometimes," the shorter one explained hesitantly.

"What feeling?" Tuvok asked, raising a brow.

Harry and Tuvok had refrained from looking at each other.

"Forgive me, I don't know the proper way to explain it..." the man fumbled.

Harry eyed Death, who appeared to be highly enjoying itself as it trailed the butt of its sythe on the
floor just a breath away from the man's foot. The Viridian stepped back as if he could see it. That's when Harry realized it. The Viridian could, perhaps not see, but strongly sense the presence of Death.

"Like you’re in the presence of Death," Harry said abruptly out loud, testing his theory.

"Yes," both men said relieved.

"Well, I wouldn't worry about that, at least today gentlemen," the captain said briskly, shooting Harry a look, plainly saying that the was not helping matters, "the sooner you help my crewmen, the sooner we can part ways."

The two Veridian exchanged a look, obviously agreeing.

After some discussion, it was agreed that Kes would donate one of her lungs, and Harry offered to donate the other. Harry had donated organs before of course. During World War Two he had provided a Kidney to a fellow soldier, the only one with the blood type to donate at the time, and when he took a bullet to the head a few months later and quickly revived, he learned that the soldier had not suffered by having it mysteriously disappear. Death had told him that as long as he was alive when they harvest the organ, or he donates blood or what have you, those bits would remain when Harry's body regenerated.

Hell, if it wouldn’t raise a lot of questions he would have just donated both his lungs to the Tilaxion.

ooo ooo ooo

A few hours later, Neelix had his new lungs, Kes and harry were lectured on what to expect, though Harry knew already, and he slunk out of Sickbay when the Doctor's back was turned, and the two lovebirds were occupied with each other.

As he walked back to his and Kim's quarters, he looked at Death floating at his side and asked.

"So those two Viridian, they sensed you," Harry asked.

"Yes, it’s not surprising really," Death hummed, "Veridians are a doomed race at the moment. They die in the thousands every day, and have been dying for over 200 years. Generation after generation of dying in a slow rot. This has left them in a state where they are unusually sensitive to my presence, because they understand they can die at any moment from the moment they are able to comprehend and understand words. I am the first world of many of them as infants," Death grinned proudly, "and I do so love their advanced Medical technology despite this. They are very entertaining."

Harry rolled his eyes exasperatedly at Death’s cackles.

End Notes

Disclaimer: This is a fan created work, the Harry Potter and the Star Trek Franchises are properties of all there known creators and affiliates.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!